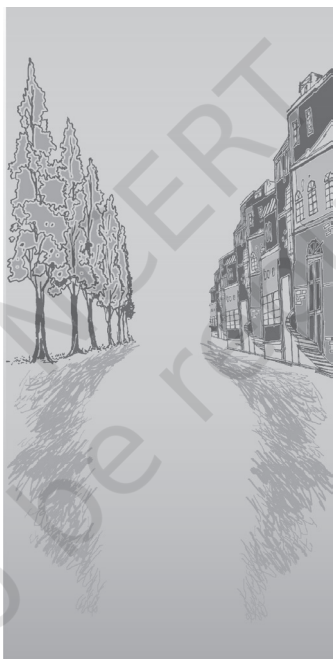
12075

Vistas

Supplementary Reader in English for Class XII

(Core Course)



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NATIONAL COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH AND TRAINING

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FOREWORD

The National Curriculum Framework, 2005, recommends that children's life at school must be linked to their life outside the school. This principle marks a departure from the legacy of bookish learning which continues to shape our system and causes a gap between the school, home and community. The syllabi and textbooks developed on the basis of NCF signify an attempt to implement this basic idea. They also attempt to discourage rote learning and the maintenance of sharp boundaries between different subject areas. We hope these measures will take us significantly further in the direction of a child-centred system of education outlined in the National Policy on Education (1986).

The success of this effort depends on the steps that school principals and teachers will take to encourage children to reflect on their own learning and to pursue imaginative activities and questions. We must recognise that, given space, time and freedom, children generate new knowledge by engaging with the information passed on to them by adults. Treating the prescribed textbook as the sole basis of examination is one of the key reasons why other resources and sites of learning are ignored. Inculcating creativity and initiative is possible if we perceive and treat children as participants in learning, not as receivers of a fixed body of knowledge.

These aims imply considerable change in school routines and mode of functioning. Flexibility in the daily time-table is as necessary as rigour in implementing the annual calendar so that the required number of teaching days are actually devoted to teaching. The methods used for teaching and evaluation will also determine how effective this textbook proves for making children's life at school a happy experience, rather than a source of stress or boredom. Syllabus designers have tried to address the problem of curricular burden by restructuring and reorienting knowledge at different stages with greater consideration for child psychology and the time available for teaching. The Supplementary Reader attempts to enhance this endeavour by giving higher priority and space to opportunities for contemplation and wondering,

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discussion in small groups, and activities requiring hands-on experience.

The National Council of Educational Research and Training (NCERT) appreciates the hard work done by the Textbook Development Committee responsible for this book. We wish to thank the Chairperson of the Advisory Committee in Languages, Professor Namwar Singh and the Chief Advisor for this book, Professor Amritavalli for guiding the work of this committee. Several teachers contributed to the development of this Supplementary Reader; we are grateful to their principals for making this possible. We are indebted to the institutions and organisations which have generously permitted us to draw upon their resources, material and personnel. We are especially grateful to the members of the National Monitoring Committee, appointed by the Department of Secondary and Higher Education, Ministry of Human Resource Development under the Chairmanship of Professor Mrinal Miri and Professor G.P. Deshpande, for their valuable time and contribution. As an organisation committed to systemic reform and continuous improvement in the quality of its products, NCERT welcomes comments and suggestions which will enable us to undertake further revision and refinement.

Director
National Council of
Educational Research
and Training

New Delhi
20 November 2006

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RATIONALISATION OF CONTENT IN THE TEXTBOOKS

In view of the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative to reduce content load on students. The National Education Policy 2020, also emphasises reducing the content load and providing opportunities for experiential learning with creative mindset. In this background, the NCERT has undertaken the exercise to rationalise the textbooks across all classes. Learning Outcomes already developed by the NCERT across classes have been taken into consideration in this exercise.

Contents of the textbooks have been rationalised in view of the following:

- Content based on genres of literature in the textbooks and supplementary readers at different stages of school education
- Content that is meant for achieving Learning Outcomes for developing language proficiency and is accessible at different stages
- For reducing the curriculum load and examination stress in view of the prevailing condition of Pandemic
- Content, which is easily accessible to students without much interventions from teachers and can be learned by children through self-learning or peer-learning
- Content, which is irrelevant in the present context

This present edition, is a reformatted version after carrying out the changes given above.

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ABOUT THE BOOK

Vistas is a supplementary reader in English (Core course) for Class XII, based on the guidelines of the *National Curriculum Framework* 2005. The main objective of this book is to make extensive reading an enjoyable experience, lead students to appreciate some of the best examples of writing and understand the social milieu they live in.

An attempt has been made to attain these objectives by presenting varied themes and genres of writing. The themes range from scientific fantasy, political satire, and adventure, to ethical and moral issues and personal conflicts.

Jack Finney's 'The Third Level' is a scientific fantasy, while 'The Tiger King' by Kalki is a political satire. 'Antartica' is a travel piece, with a suggestion that the young reader could take part in the expedition by logging on to www.studentsonice.com.

The two stories that follow are by Pearl S. Buck. Buck's story sets human fellow-feeling against national loyalty.

The play by Susan Hill is on the themes of disabilities while excerpts from Bama's 'Karukku' and an excerpt from 'The Land of the Red Apple', a story in Zitkala-Sa's, book 'The School Days of an Indian Girl'.

Each unit has questions. The question on the texts in the supplementary reader take the learner beyond factual comprehension to contemplating on the issues that the texts raise. Activities suggested take off from the texts.

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Gandhiji's Talisman

I will give you a talisman. Whenever you are in doubt or when the self becomes too much with you, apply the following test:

Recall the face of the poorest and the weakest man whom you may have seen and ask yourself if the step you contemplate is going to be of any use to him. Will he gain anything by it? Will it restore him to a control over his own life and destiny? In other words, will it lead to Swaraj for the hungry and spiritually starving millions?

Then you will find your doubts and your self melting away.

M.K. Gandhi

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The Council is grateful to the members of the Review Committee for Rationalisation of Curriculum constituted by Department of Curriculum Studies NCERT, from CBSE and Department of Education in Languages NCERT New Delhi for reviewing the textbooks and Supplementary Readers.

The Council acknowledges the services of Sunanda Khanna and G C Chandrakar, *Copy Editors*; Surender K Vats, *Proof Reader*; Mohd. Harun, *DTP Operator*; and Parash Ram Kaushik, *Incharge*, Computer Station. The efforts of the publication Department, NCERT are also highly appreciated.

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THE CONSTITUTION OF INDIA

PREAMBLE

WE, THE PEOPLE OF INDIA, having solemnly resolved to constitute India into a [1]**[SOVEREIGN SOCIALIST SECULAR DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC]** and to secure to all its citizens :

JUSTICE, social, economic and political;

LIBERTY of thought, expression, belief, faith and worship;

EQUALITY of status and of opportunity; and to promote among them all

FRATERNITY assuring the dignity of the individual and the [2][unity and integrity of the Nation];

IN OUR CONSTITUENT ASSEMBLY this twenty-sixth day of November, 1949 do **HEREBY ADOPT, ENACT AND GIVE TO OURSELVES THIS CONSTITUTION.**

---

1. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Sovereign Democratic Republic" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)
2. Subs. by the Constitution (Forty-second Amendment) Act, 1976, Sec.2, for "Unity of the Nation" (w.e.f. 3.1.1977)

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1

The Third Level

Jack Finney

Before you read

Have you ever had any curious experience which others find hard to believe?

THE presidents of the New York Central and the New York, New Haven and Hartford railroads will swear on a stack of timetables that there are only two. But I say there are three, because I've *been* on the third level of the Grand Central Station. Yes, I've taken the obvious step: I talked to a psychiatrist friend of mine, among others. I told him about the third level at Grand Central Station, and he said it was a waking-dream wish fulfillment. He said I was unhappy. That made my wife kind of mad, but he explained that he meant the modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and all the rest of it, and that I just want to escape. Well, who doesn't? Everybody I know wants to escape, but they don't wander down into any third level at Grand Central Station.

But that's the reason, he said, and my friends all agreed. Everything points to it, they claimed. My stamp collecting, for example; that's a 'temporary refuge from reality.' Well, maybe, but my grandfather didn't need any refuge from reality; things were pretty nice and peaceful in his day, from all I hear, and he started my collection. It's a nice collection too, blocks of four of practically

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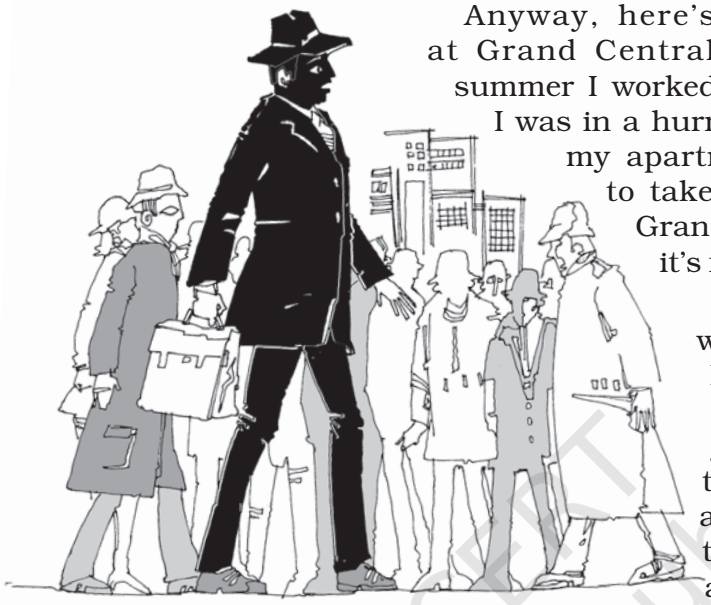
every U.S. issue, first-day covers, and so on. President Roosevelt collected stamps too, you know.



Anyway, here's what happened at Grand Central. One night last summer I worked late at the office. I was in a hurry to get uptown to my apartment so I decided to take the subway from Grand Central because it's faster than the bus.

Now, I don't know why this should have happened to me. I'm just an ordinary guy named Charley, thirty-one years old, and I was wearing a tan gabardine suit and a straw hat with a fancy band; I passed a dozen men who looked just like me. And I wasn't trying to escape from anything; I just wanted to get home to Louisa, my wife.

I turned into Grand Central from Vanderbilt Avenue, and went down the steps to the first level, where you take trains like the Twentieth Century. Then I walked down another flight to the second level, where the suburban trains leave from, ducked into an arched doorway heading for the subway — and got lost. That's easy to do. I've been in and out of Grand Central hundreds of times, but I'm always bumping into new doorways and stairs and corridors. Once I got into a tunnel about a mile long and came out in the lobby of the Roosevelt Hotel. Another time I came up in an office building on Forty-sixth Street, three blocks away.

Sometimes I think Grand Central is growing like a tree, pushing out new corridors and staircases like roots. There's probably a long tunnel that nobody knows about feeling its way under the city right now, on its way to Times Square, and maybe another to Central Park. And maybe — because for so many people through the years

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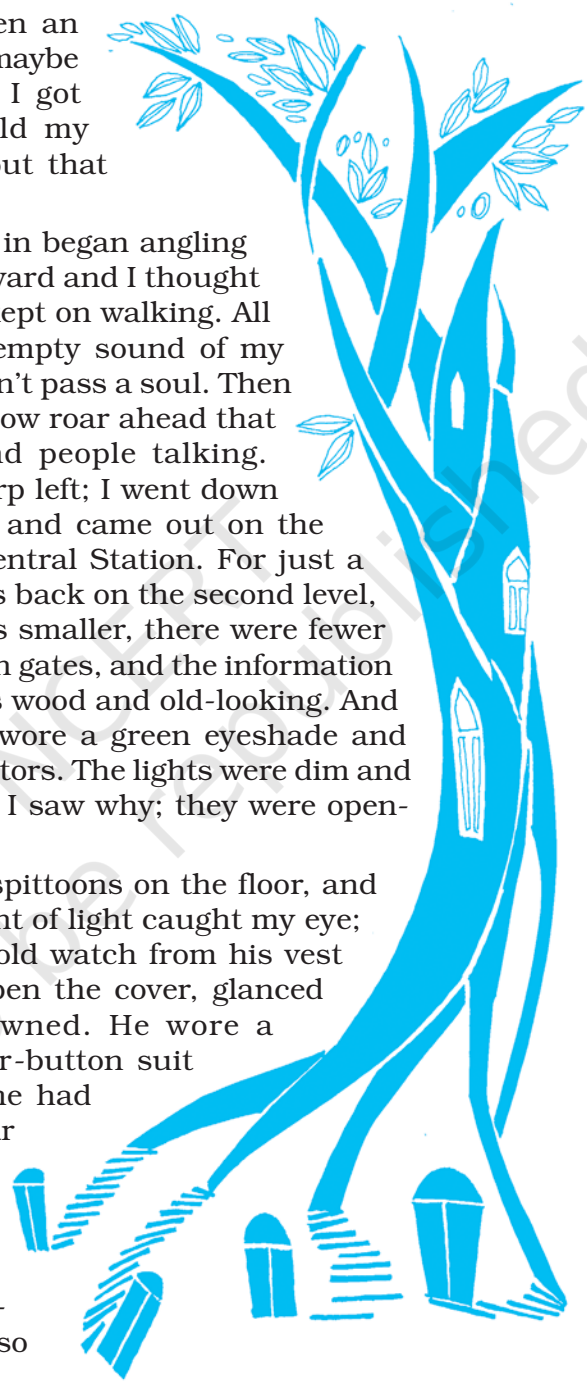
Grand Central *has* been an exit, a way of escape — maybe that's how the tunnel I got into... But I never told my psychiatrist friend about that idea.

The corridor I was in began angling left and slanting downward and I thought that was wrong, but I kept on walking. All I could hear was the empty sound of my own footsteps and I didn't pass a soul. Then I heard that sort of hollow roar ahead that means open space and people talking. The tunnel turned sharp left; I went down a short flight of stairs and came out on the third level at Grand Central Station. For just a moment I thought I was back on the second level, but I saw the room was smaller, there were fewer ticket windows and train gates, and the information booth in the centre was wood and old-looking. And the man in the booth wore a green eyeshade and long black sleeve protectors. The lights were dim and sort of flickering. Then I saw why; they were open-flame gaslights.

There were brass spittoons on the floor, and across the station a glint of light caught my eye; a man was pulling a gold watch from his vest pocket. He snapped open the cover, glanced at his watch and frowned. He wore a derby hat, a black four-button suit with tiny lapels, and he had a big, black, handlebar mustache. Then I looked around and saw that everyone in the station was dressed like eighteen-ninety-something; I never saw so



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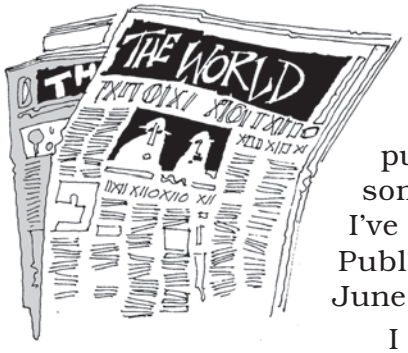
many beards, sideburns and fancy mustaches in my life. A woman walked in through the train gate; she wore a dress with leg-of-mutton sleeves and skirts to the top of her high-buttoned shoes. Back of her, out on the tracks, I caught a glimpse of a locomotive, a very small Currier & Ives locomotive with a funnel-shaped stack. And then I knew.



To make sure, I walked over to a newsboy and glanced at the stack of papers at his feet. It was *The World;* and *The World* hasn't been published for years. The lead story said something about President Cleveland. I've found that front page since, in the Public Library files, and it was printed June 11, 1894.

I turned toward the ticket windows knowing that here — on the third level at Grand Central — I could buy tickets that would take Louisa and me anywhere in the United States we wanted to go. In the year 1894. And I wanted two tickets to Galesburg, Illinois.

Have you ever been there? It's a wonderful town still, with big old frame houses, huge lawns, and tremendous trees whose branches meet overhead and roof the streets. And in 1894, summer evenings were twice as long, and people sat out on their lawns, the men smoking cigars and talking quietly, the women waving palm-leaf fans, with the fire-flies all around, in a peaceful world. To be back there with the First World War still twenty years off, and World War II over forty years in the future... I wanted two tickets for that.

The clerk figured the fare — he glanced at my fancy hatband, but he figured the fare — and I had enough for two coach tickets, one way. But when I counted out the money and looked up, the clerk was staring at me. He nodded at the bills. "That ain't money, mister," he said, "and if you're trying to skin me, you won't get very far," and he glanced at the cash drawer beside him. Of course the money was old-style bills, half again as big as the money we use nowadays, and different-looking. I turned away and got out fast. There's nothing nice about jail, even in 1894.

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Read and find out

Would Charley ever go back to the ticket-counter on the third level to buy tickets to Galesburg for himself and his wife?

And that was that. I left the same way I came, I suppose. Next day, during lunch hour, I drew three hundred dollars out of the bank, nearly all we had, and bought old-style currency (that *really* worried my psychiatrist friend). You can buy old money at almost any coin dealer's, but you have to pay a premium. My three hundred dollars bought less than two hundred in old-style bills, but I didn't care; eggs were thirteen cents a dozen in 1894.

But I've never again found the corridor that leads to the third level at Grand Central Station, although I've tried often enough.

Louisa was pretty worried when I told her all this, and didn't want me to look for the third level any more, and after a while I stopped; I went back to my stamps. But now we're *both* looking, every weekend, because now we have proof that the third level is still there. My friend Sam Weiner disappeared! Nobody knew where, but I sort of suspected because Sam's a city boy, and I used to tell him about Galesburg — I went to school there — and he always said he liked the sound of the place. And that's where he is, all right. In 1894.

Because one night, fussing with my stamp collection, I found — Well, do you know what a first-day cover is? When a new stamp is issued, stamp collectors buy some and use them to mail envelopes to themselves on the very first day of sale; and the postmark proves the date. The envelope is called a first-day cover. They're never opened; you just put blank paper in the envelope.

That night, among my oldest first-day covers, I found one that shouldn't have been there. But there it was. It was there because someone had mailed it to my grandfather at his home in Galesburg; that's what the address on the envelope said. And it had been there since July 18, 1894 — the postmark showed that — yet I didn't remember it at all. The stamp was a six-cent, dull brown, with a picture of President Garfield. Naturally, when the envelope came to Granddad in the mail, it went right into his collection and stayed there — till I took it out and opened it.

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The paper inside wasn't blank. It read:

941 Willard Street
Galesburg, Illinois
July 18, 1894

Charley

I got to wishing that you were right. Then I got to believing you were right. And, Charley, it's true; I found the third level! I've been here two weeks, and right now, down the street at the Daly's, someone is playing a piano, and they're all out on the front porch singing 'Seeing Nelly Home.' And I'm invited over for lemonade. Come on back, Charley and Louisa. Keep looking till you find the third level! It's worth it, believe me!

The note is signed *Sam.*

At the stamp and coin store I go to, I found out that Sam bought eight hundred dollars' worth of old-style currency. That ought to set him up in a nice little hay, feed and grain business; he always said that's what he really wished he could do, and he certainly can't go back to his old business. Not in Galesburg, Illinois, in 1894. His old business? Why, Sam was my psychiatrist.

Reading with Insight

1. Do you think that the third level was a medium of escape for Charley? Why?
2. What do you infer from Sam's letter to Charley?
3. 'The modern world is full of insecurity, fear, war, worry and stress.' What are the ways in which we attempt to overcome them?
4. Do you see an intersection of time and space in the story?
5. Apparent illogicality sometimes turns out to be a futuristic projection? Discuss.

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6. Philately helps keep the past alive. Discuss other ways in which this is done. What do you think of the human tendency to constantly move between the past, the present and the future?
7. You have read 'Adventure' by Jayant Narlikar in *Hornbill* Class XI. Compare the interweaving of fantasy and reality in the two stories.

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2

The Tiger King

Kalki

I

Before you read

What is the general attitude of human beings towards wild animals?

THE Maharaja of Pratibandapuram is the hero of this story. He may be identified as His Highness Jamedar-General, Khiledar-Major, Sata Vyaghra Samhari, Maharajadhiraja Visva Bhuvana Samrat, Sir Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur, M.A.D., A.C.T.C., or C.R.C.K. But this name is often shortened to the Tiger King.

Read and find out

Who is the Tiger King? Why does he get that name?

I have come forward to tell you why he came to be known as Tiger King. I have no intention of pretending to advance only to end in a strategic withdrawal. Even the threat of a Stuka bomber will not throw me off track. The Stuka, if it likes, can beat a hasty retreat from my story.

Right at the start, it is imperative to disclose a matter of vital importance about the Tiger King. Everyone who reads of him will experience the natural desire to meet a man of his indomitable courage face-to-face. But there is no chance of its fulfilment. As Bharata said to Rama about Dasaratha, the Tiger King has reached that final abode of all living creatures. In other words, the Tiger King is dead.

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The manner of his death is a matter of extraordinary interest. It can be revealed only at the end of the tale. The most fantastic aspect of his demise was that as soon as he was born, astrologers had foretold that one day the Tiger King would actually have to die.

"The child will grow up to become the warrior of warriors, hero of heroes, champion of champions. But..." they bit their lips and swallowed hard. When compelled to continue, the astrologers came out with it. "This is a secret which should not be revealed at all. And yet we are forced to speak out. The child born under this star will one day have to meet its death."

At that very moment a great miracle took place. An astonishing phrase emerged from the lips of the ten-day-old Jilani Jung Jung Bahadur, "O wise prophets!"

Everyone stood transfixed in stupefaction. They looked wildly at each other and blinked.

"O wise prophets! It was I who spoke."

This time there were no grounds for doubt. It was the infant born just ten days ago who had enunciated the words so clearly.

The chief astrologer took off his spectacles and gazed intently at the baby.

"All those who are born will one day have to die. We don't need your predictions to know that. There would be some sense in it if you could tell us the manner of that death," the royal infant uttered these words in his little squeaky voice.

The chief astrologer placed his finger on his nose in wonder. A baby barely ten days old opens its lips in speech! Not only that, it also raises intelligent questions! Incredible! Rather like the bulletins issued by the war office, than facts.

The chief astrologer took his finger off his nose and fixed his eyes upon the little prince.

"The prince was born in the hour of the Bull. The Bull and the Tiger are enemies, therefore, death comes from the Tiger," he explained.

You may think that crown prince Jung Jung Bahadur was thrown into a quake when he heard the word 'Tiger'. That was exactly what did not happen. As soon as he heard it pronounced,

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the crown prince gave a deep growl. Terrifying words emerged from his lips.

"Let tigers beware!"

This account is only a rumour rife in Pratibandapuram. But with hindsight we may conclude it was based on some truth.

II

Crown prince Jung Jung Bahadur grew taller and stronger day by day. No other miracle marked his childhood days apart from the event already described. The boy drank the milk of an English cow, was brought up by an English nanny, tutored in English by an Englishman, saw nothing but English films — exactly as the crown princes of all the other Indian states did. When he came of age at twenty, the State, which had been with the Court of Wards until then, came into his hands.

But everyone in the kingdom remembered the astrologer's prediction. Many continued to discuss the matter. Slowly it came to the Maharaja's ears.

There were innumerable forests in the Pratibandapuram State. They had tigers in them. The Maharaja knew the old saying, 'You may kill even a cow in self-defence'. There could certainly be no objection to killing tigers in self-defence. The Maharaja started out on a tiger hunt.

The Maharaja was thrilled beyond measure when he killed his first tiger. He sent for the State astrologer and showed him the dead beast.

"What do you say now?" he demanded.

"Your majesty may kill ninety-nine tigers in exactly the same manner. But..." the astrologer drawled.

"But what? Speak without fear."

"But you must be very careful with the hundredth tiger."

"What if the hundredth tiger were also killed?"

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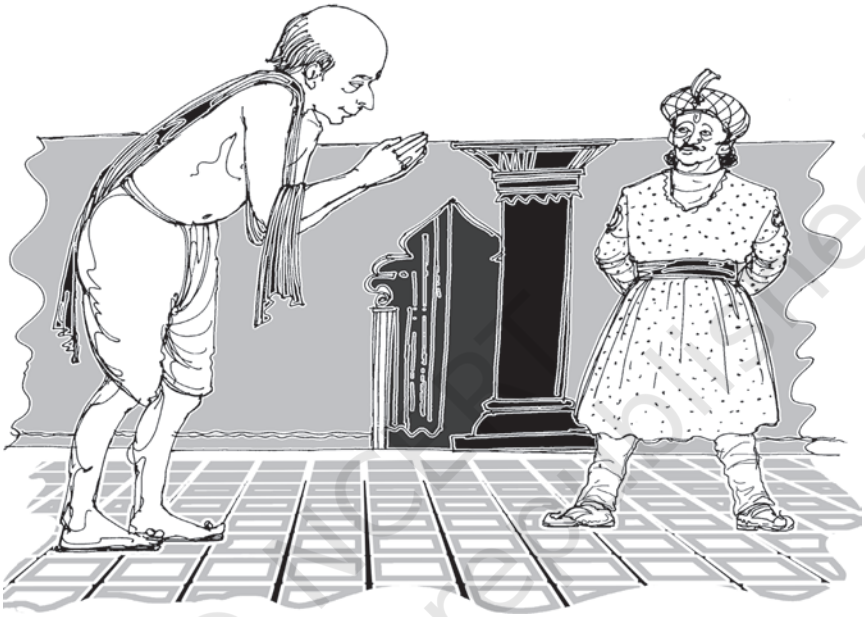
"Then I will tear up all my books on astrology, set fire to them, and…"

"And…"

"I shall cut off my tuft, crop my hair short and become an insurance agent," the astrologer finished on an incoherent note.



III

From that day onwards it was celebration time for all the tigers inhabiting Pratibandapuram.

The State banned tiger hunting by anyone except the Maharaja. A proclamation was issued to the effect that if anyone dared to fling so much as a stone at a tiger, all his wealth and property would be confiscated.

The Maharaja vowed he would attend to all other matters only after killing the hundred tigers. Initially the king seemed well set to realise his ambition.

Not that he faced no dangers. There were times when the bullet missed its mark, the tiger leapt upon him and he fought the beast with his bare hands. Each time it was the Maharaja who won.

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At another time he was in danger of losing his throne. A high-ranking British officer visited Pratibandapuram. He was very fond of hunting tigers. And fonder of being photographed with the tigers he had shot. As usual, he wished to hunt tigers in Pratibandapuram. But the Maharaja was firm in his resolve. He refused permission. "I can organise any other hunt. You may go on a boar hunt. You may conduct a mouse hunt. We are ready for a mosquito hunt. But tiger hunt! That's impossible!"

The British officer's secretary sent word to the Maharaja through the dewan that the *durai* himself did not have to kill the tiger. The Maharaja could do the actual killing. What was important to the *durai* was a photograph of himself holding the gun and standing over the tiger's carcass. But the Maharaja would not agree even to this proposal. If he relented now, what would he do if other British officers turned up for tiger hunts?

Because he prevented a British officer from fulfilling his desire, the Maharaja stood in danger of losing his kingdom itself.

The Maharaja and the dewan held deliberations over this issue. As a result, a telegram was despatched forthwith to a famous British company of jewellers in Calcutta. 'Send samples of expensive diamond rings of different designs.'

Some fifty rings arrived. The Maharaja sent the whole lot to the British officer's good lady. The king and the minister expected the *duraisani* to choose one or two rings and send the rest back. Within no time at all the *duraisani* sent her reply: 'Thank you very much for your gifts.'

In two days a bill for three lakh of rupees came from the British jewellers. The Maharaja was happy that though he had lost three lakh of rupees, he had managed to retain his kingdom.

IV

The Maharaja's tiger hunts continued to be highly successful. Within ten years he was able to kill seventy tigers. And then, an unforeseen hurdle brought his mission to a standstill. The tiger population became extinct in the forests of Pratibandapuram. Who knows whether the tigers practised birth control or committed

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harakiri? Or simply ran away from the State because they desired to be shot by British hands alone?

One day the Maharaja sent for the dewan. "Dewan saheb, aren't you aware of the fact that thirty tigers still remain to be shot down by this gun of mine?" he asked brandishing his gun.

Shuddering at the sight of the gun, the dewan cried out, "Your Majesty! I am not a tiger!"

"Which idiot would call you a tiger?"

"No, and I'm not a gun!"

"You are neither tiger nor gun. Dewan saheb, I summoned you here for a different purpose. I have decided to get married."

The dewan began to babble even more. "Your Majesty, I have two wives already. If I marry you …"

"Don't talk nonsense! Why should I marry you? What I want is a tiger…"

"Your Majesty! Please think it over. Your ancestors were married to the sword. If you like, marry the gun. A Tiger King is more than enough for this state. It doesn't need a Tiger Queen as well!"

The Maharaja gave a loud crack of laughter. "I'm not thinking of marrying either a tiger or a gun, but a girl from the ranks of human beings. First you may draw up statistics of tiger populations in the different native states. Next you may investigate if there is a girl I can marry in the royal family of a state with a large tiger population."

The dewan followed his orders. He found the right girl from a state which possessed a large number of tigers.

Maharaja Jung Jung Bahadur killed five or six tigers each time he visited his father-in-law. In this manner, ninety-nine tiger skins adorned the walls of the reception hall in the Pratibandapuram palace.

V

The Maharaja's anxiety reached a fever pitch when there remained just one tiger to achieve his tally of a hundred. He had

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Read and find out

How will the Maharaja prepare himself for the hundredth tiger which was supposed to decide his fate?

this one thought during the day and the same dream at night. By this time the tiger farms had run dry even in his father-in-law's kingdom. It became impossible to locate tigers anywhere. Yet only one more was needed. If he could kill just that one single beast, the Maharaja would have no fears left. He could give up tiger hunting altogether.

But he had to be extremely careful with that last tiger. What had the late chief astrologer said? "Even after killing ninety-nine tigers the Maharaja should beware of the hundredth..." True enough. The tiger was a savage beast after all. One had to be wary of it. But where was that hundredth tiger to be found? It seemed easier to find tiger's milk than a live tiger.

Thus the Maharaja was sunk in gloom. But soon came the happy news which dispelled that gloom. In his own state sheep began to disappear frequently from a hillside village.

It was first ascertained that this was not the work of Khader Mian Saheb or Virasami Naicker, both famed for their ability to swallow sheep whole. Surely, a tiger was at work. The villagers ran to inform the Maharaja. The Maharaja announced a three-year exemption from all taxes for that village and set out on the hunt at once.

The tiger was not easily found. It seemed as if it had wantonly hid itself in order to flout the Maharaja's will.

The Maharaja was equally determined. He refused to leave the forest until the tiger was found. As the days passed, the Maharaja's fury and obstinacy mounted alarmingly. Many officers lost their jobs.

One day when his rage was at its height, the Maharaja called the dewan and ordered him to double the land tax forthwith.

"The people will become discontented. Then our state too will fall a prey to the Indian National Congress."

"In that case you may resign from your post," said the king.

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The dewan went home convinced that if the Maharaja did not find the tiger soon, the results could be catastrophic. He felt life returning to him only when he saw the tiger which had been brought from the People's Park in Madras and kept hidden in his house.

At midnight when the town slept in peace, the dewan and his aged wife dragged the tiger to the car and shoved it into the seat. The dewan himself drove the car straight to the forest where the Maharaja was hunting. When they reached the forest the tiger launched its satyagraha and refused to get out of the car. The dewan was thoroughly exhausted in his efforts to haul the beast out of the car and push it down to the ground.

On the following day, the same old tiger wandered into the Maharaja's presence and stood as if in humble supplication, "Master, what do you command of me?" It was with boundless joy that the Maharaja took careful aim at the beast. The tiger fell in a crumpled heap.

"I have killed the hundredth tiger. My vow has been fulfilled," the Maharaja was overcome with elation. Ordering the tiger to be brought to the capital in grand procession, the Maharaja hastened away in his car.

Read and find out

What will now happen to the astrologer? Do you think the prophecy was indisputably disproved?

After the Maharaja left, the hunters went to take a closer look at the tiger. The tiger looked back at them rolling its eyes in bafflement. The men realised that the tiger was not dead; the bullet had missed it. It had fainted from the shock of the bullet whizzing past. The hunters wondered what they should do. They decided that the Maharaja must not come to know that he had missed his target. If he did, they could lose their jobs. One of the hunters took aim from a distance of one foot and shot the tiger. This time he killed it without missing his mark.

Then, as commanded by the king, the dead tiger was taken in procession through the town and buried. A tomb was erected over it.

A few days later the Maharaja's son's third birthday was celebrated. Until then the Maharaja had given his entire mind over to tiger hunting. He had had no time to spare for the crown prince.

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But now the king turned his attention to the child. He wished to give him some special gift on his birthday. He went to the shopping centre in Pratibandapuram and searched every shop, but couldn't find anything suitable. Finally he spotted a wooden tiger in a toyshop and decided it was the perfect gift.

The wooden tiger cost only two annas and a quarter. But the shopkeeper knew that if he quoted such a low price to the Maharaja, he would be punished under the rules of the Emergency. So, he said, "Your Majesty, this is an extremely rare example of craftsmanship. A bargain at three hundred rupees!"

"Very good. Let this be your offering to the crown prince on his birthday," said the king and took it away with him.

On that day father and son played with that tiny little wooden tiger. It had been carved by an unskilled carpenter. Its surface was rough; tiny slivers of wood stood up like quills all over it. One of those slivers pierced the Maharaja's right hand. He pulled it out with his left hand and continued to play with the prince.

The next day, infection flared in the Maharaja's right hand. In four days, it developed into a suppurating sore which spread all over the arm.

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Three famous surgeons were brought in from Madras. After holding a consultation they decided to operate. The operation took place.

The three surgeons who performed it came out of the theatre and announced, "The operation was successful. The Maharaja is dead."

In this manner the hundredth tiger took its final revenge upon the Tiger King.

Reading with Insight

1. The story is a satire on the conceit of those in power. How does the author employ the literary device of dramatic irony in the story?
2. What is the author's indirect comment on subjecting innocent animals to the willfulness of human beings?
3. How would you describe the behaviour of the Maharaja's minions towards him? Do you find them truly sincere towards him or are they driven by fear when they obey him? Do we find a similarity in today's political order?
4. Can you relate instances of game-hunting among the rich and the powerful in the present times that illustrate the callousness of human beings towards wildlife?
5. We need a new system for the age of ecology — a system which is embedded in the care of all people and also in the care of the Earth and all life upon it. Discuss.

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3

Journey to the end of the Earth

Tishani Doshi

Before you read

If you want to know more about the planet's past, present and future, the Antarctica is the place to go to. Bon Voyage!

EARLY this year, I found myself aboard a Russian research vessel — the *Akademik Shokalskiy* — heading towards the coldest, driest, windiest continent in the world: Antarctica. My journey began 13.09 degrees north of the Equator in Madras, and involved crossing nine time zones, six checkpoints, three bodies of water, and at least as many ecospheres.

By the time I actually set foot on the Antarctic continent I had been travelling over 100 hours in combination of a car, an aeroplane and a ship; so, my first emotion on facing Antarctica's expansive white landscape and uninterrupted blue horizon was relief, followed up with an immediate and profound wonder. Wonder at its immensity, its isolation, but mainly at how there could ever have been a time when India and Antarctica were part of the same landmass.

Part of history

Six hundred and fifty million years ago, a giant amalgamated southern supercontinent — Gondwana — did indeed exist, centred roughly around the present-day Antarctica. Things were quite different then: humans hadn't arrived on the global scene, and the climate was much warmer, hosting a huge variety of flora and

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fauna. For 500 million years Gondwana thrived, but around the time when the dinosaurs were wiped out and the age of the mammals got under way, the landmass was forced to separate into countries, shaping the globe much as we know it today.

Read and find out

How do geological phenomena help us to know about the history of humankind?

To visit Antarctica now is to be a part of that history; to get a grasp of where we've come from and where we could possibly be heading. It's to understand the significance of Cordilleran folds and pre-Cambrian granite shields; ozone and carbon; evolution and extinction. When you think about all that can happen in a million years, it can get pretty mind-boggling. Imagine: India pushing northwards, jamming against Asia to buckle its crust and form the Himalayas; South America drifting off to join North America, opening up the Drake Passage to create a cold circumpolar current, keeping Antarctica frigid, desolate, and at the bottom of the world.

For a sun-worshipping South Indian like myself, two weeks in a place where 90 per cent of the Earth's total ice volumes are stored is a chilling prospect (not just for circulatory and metabolic functions, but also for the imagination). It's like walking into a giant ping-pong ball devoid of any human markers — no trees, billboards, buildings. You lose all earthly sense of perspective and time here. The visual scale ranges from the microscopic to the mighty: midges and mites to blue whales and icebergs as big as countries (the largest recorded

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was the size of Belgium). Days go on and on and on in surreal 24-hour austral summer light, and a ubiquitous silence, interrupted only by the occasional avalanche or calving ice sheet, consecrates the place. It's an immersion that will force you to place yourself in the context of the earth's geological history. And for humans, the prognosis isn't good.

Human impact

Human civilisations have been around for a paltry 12,000 years — barely a few seconds on the geological clock. In that short amount of time, we've managed to create quite a ruckus, etching our dominance over Nature with our villages, towns, cities, megacities. The rapid increase of human populations has left us battling with other species for limited resources, and the unmitigated burning of fossil fuels has now created a blanket of carbon dioxide around the world, which is slowly but surely increasing the average global temperature.

Climate change is one of the most hotly contested environmental debates of our time. Will the West Antarctic ice sheet melt entirely? Will the Gulf Stream ocean current be disrupted? Will it be the end of the world as we know it? Maybe. Maybe not. Either way, Antarctica is a crucial element in this debate — not just because it's the only place in the world, which has never sustained a human population and therefore remains relatively 'pristine' in this respect; but more importantly, because it holds in its ice-cores half-million-year-old carbon records trapped in its layers of ice. If we want to study and examine the Earth's past, present and future, Antarctica is the place to go.

Students on Ice, the programme I was working with on the *Shokalskiy*, aims to do exactly this by taking high school students to the ends of the world and providing them with inspiring educational opportunities which will help them foster a new understanding and respect for our planet. It's been in operation for six years now, headed by Canadian Geoff Green, who got tired of carting celebrities

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and retired, rich, curiosity-seekers who could only 'give' back in a limited way. With *Students on Ice*, he offers the future generation of policy-makers a life-changing experience at an age when they're ready to absorb, learn, and most importantly, act.

The reason the programme has been so successful is because it's impossible to go anywhere near the South Pole and not be affected by it. It's easy to be blasé about polar ice-caps melting while sitting in the comfort zone of our respective latitude and longitude, but when you can visibly see glaciers retreating and ice shelves collapsing, you begin to realise that the threat of global warming is very real.

Antarctica, because of her simple ecosystem and lack of biodiversity, is the perfect place to study how little changes in the environment can have big repercussions. Take the microscopic phytoplankton — those grasses of the sea that nourish and sustain the entire Southern Ocean's food chain. These single-celled plants use the sun's energy to assimilate carbon and synthesise organic compounds in that wondrous and most important of processes

called photosynthesis. Scientists warn that a further depletion in the ozone layer will affect the activities of phytoplankton, which in turn will affect the lives of all the marine animals and birds of the region, and the global carbon cycle. In the parable of the phytoplankton, there is a great metaphor for existence: take care of the small things and the big things will fall into place.

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Walk on the ocean

My Antarctic experience was full of such epiphanies, but the best occurred just short of the Antarctic Circle at 65.55 degrees south. The *Shokalskiy* had managed to wedge herself into a thick white stretch of ice between the peninsula and Tadpole Island which was preventing us from going any further. The Captain decided we were going to turn around and head back north, but before we did, we were all instructed to climb down the gangplank and walk on the ocean. So there we were, all 52 of us, kitted out in Gore-Tex and glares, walking on a stark whiteness that seemed to spread out forever. Underneath our feet was a metre-thick ice pack, and underneath that, 180 metres of living, breathing, salt water. In the periphery Crabeater seals were stretching and sunning themselves on ice floes much like stray dogs will do under the shade of a banyan tree. It was nothing short of a revelation: everything does indeed connect.

Nine time zones, six checkpoints, three bodies of water and many ecospheres later, I was still wondering about the beauty of balance in play on our planet. How would it be if Antarctica were to become the warm place that it once used to be? Will we be around to see it, or would we have gone the way of the dinosaurs, mammoths and woolly rhinos? Who's to say? But after spending two weeks with a bunch of teenagers who still have the idealism to save the world, all I can say is that a lot can happen in a million years, but what a difference a day makes!

Reading with Insight

1. 'The world's geological history is trapped in Antarctica.' How is the study of this region useful to us?
2. What are Geoff Green's reasons for including high school students in the *Students on Ice* expedition?

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3. 'Take care of the small things and the big things will take care of themselves.' What is the relevance of this statement in the context of the Antarctic environment?
4. Why is Antarctica the place to go to, to understand the earth's present, past and future?

For more information on *Students on Ice* visit www.studentsonice.com

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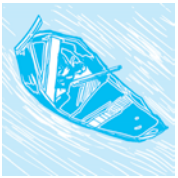

4
The Enemy

Pearl S. Buck

Before you Read

It is the time of the World War. An American prisoner of war is washed ashore in a dying state and is found at the doorstep of a Japanese doctor. Should he save him as a doctor or hand him over to the Army as a patriot?

Read and find out

Who was Dr Sadao?
Where was his house?

Dr Sadao Hoki's house was built on a spot of the Japanese coast where as a little boy he had often played. The low, square stone house was set upon rocks well above a narrow beach that was outlined with bent pines. As a boy Sadao had climbed the pines, supporting himself on his bare feet, as he had seen men do in the South Seas when they climbed for coconuts. His father had taken him often to the islands of those seas, and never had he failed to say to the little brave boy at his side, "Those islands yonder, they are the stepping stones to the future for Japan."

"Where shall we step from them?" Sadao had asked seriously.

"Who knows?" his father had answered. "Who can limit our future? It depends on what we make it."

Sadao had taken this into his mind as he did everything his father said, his father who never joked or played with him but who spent infinite pains upon him who was his only son. Sadao knew that his education was his father's chief concern. For this reason

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he had been sent at twenty-two to America to learn all that could be learned of surgery and medicine. He had come back at thirty, and before his father died he had seen Sadao become famous not only as a surgeon but as a scientist. Because he was perfecting a discovery which would render wounds entirely clean, he had not been sent abroad with the troops. Also, he knew, there was some slight danger that the old General might need an operation for a condition for which he was now being treated medically, and for this possibility Sadao was being kept in Japan.

Clouds were rising from the ocean now. The unexpected warmth of the past few days had at night drawn heavy fog from the cold waves. Sadao watched mists hide outlines of a little island near the shore and then come creeping up the beach below the house, wreathing around the pines. In a few minutes fog would be wrapped about the house too. Then he would go into the room where Hana, his wife, would be waiting for him with the two children.

But at this moment the door opened and she looked out, a dark-blue woollen haori[1] over her kimono. She came to him affectionately and put her arm through his as he stood, smiled and said nothing. He had met Hana in America, but he had waited to fall in love with her until he was sure she was Japanese. His father would never have received her unless she had been pure in her race. He wondered often whom he would have married if he had not met Hana, and by what luck he had found her in the most casual way, by chance literally, at an American professor's house. The professor and his wife had been kind people anxious to do something for their few foreign students, and the students, though bored, had accepted this kindness. Sadao had often told Hana how nearly he had not gone to Professor Harley's house that night — the rooms were so small, the food so bad, the professor's wife so voluble. But he had gone and there he had found Hana, a new student, and had felt he would love her if it were at all possible.

Now he felt her hand on his arm and was aware of the pleasure it gave him, even though they had been married years enough to have the two children. For they had not married heedlessly in America. They had finished their work at school and had come home

[1] haori: a loose outer garment worn over the kimono.

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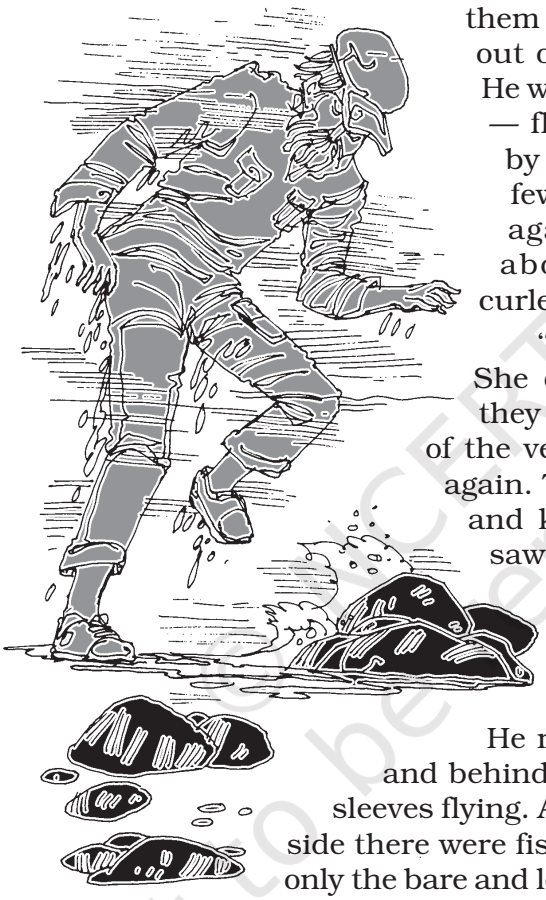
to Japan, and when his father had seen her the marriage had been arranged in the old Japanese way, although Sadao and Hana had talked everything over beforehand. They were perfectly happy. She laid her cheek against his arm.



It was at this moment that both of them saw something black come out of the mists. It was a man. He was flung up out of the ocean — flung, it seemed, to his feet by a breaker. He staggered a few steps, his body outlined against the mist, his arms above his head. Then the curled mists hid him again.

"Who is that?" Hana cried. She dropped Sadao's arm and they both leaned over the railing of the veranda. Now they saw him again. The man was on his hands and knees crawling. Then they saw him fall on his face and lie there.

"A fisherman perhaps," Sadao said, "washed from his boat." He ran quickly down the steps and behind him Hana came, her wide sleeves flying. A mile or two away on either side there were fishing villages, but here was only the bare and lonely coast, dangerous with rocks. The surf beyond the beach was spiked with rocks. Somehow the man had managed to come through them — he must be badly torn.

They saw when they came toward him that indeed it was so. The sand on one side of him had already a stain of red soaking through.

"He is wounded," Sadao exclaimed. He made haste to the man, who lay motionless, his face in the sand. An old cap stuck to his

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head soaked with sea water. He was in wet rags of garments. Sadao stopped, Hana at his side, and turned the man's head. They saw the face.

"A white man!" Hana whispered.

Yes, it was a white man. The wet cap fell away and there was his wet yellow hair, long, as though for many weeks it had not been cut, and upon his young and tortured face was a rough yellow beard. He was unconscious and knew nothing that they did for him.

Now Sadao remembered the wound, and with his expert fingers he began to search for it. Blood flowed freshly at his touch. On the right side of his lower back Sadao saw that a gun wound had been reopened. The flesh was blackened with powder. Sometime, not many days ago, the man had been shot and had not been tended. It was bad chance that the rock had struck the wound.

Read and find out

Will Dr Sadao be arrested on the charge of harbouring an enemy?

"Oh, how he is bleeding!" Hana whispered again in a solemn voice. The mists screened them now completely, and at this time of day no one came by. The fishermen had gone home and even the chance beachcombers would have considered the day at an end.

"What shall we do with this man?" Sadao muttered. But his trained hands seemed of their own will to be doing what they could to stanch the fearful bleeding. He packed the wound with the sea moss that strewed the beach. The man moaned with pain in his stupor but he did not awaken.

"The best thing that we could do would be to put him back in the sea," Sadao said, answering himself.

Now that the bleeding was stopped for the moment he stood up and dusted the sand from his hands.

"Yes, undoubtedly that would be best," Hana said steadily. But she continued to stare down at the motionless man.

"If we sheltered a white man in our house we should be arrested and if we turned him over as a prisoner, he would certainly die," Sadao said.

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"The kindest thing would be to put him back into the sea," Hana said. But neither of them moved. They were staring with a curious repulsion upon the inert figure.

"What is he?" Hana whispered.

"There is something about him that looks American," Sadao said. He took up the battered cap. Yes, there, almost gone, was the faint lettering. "A sailor," he said, "from an American warship." He spelled it out: "U.S. Navy." The man was a prisoner of war!

"He has escaped." Hana cried softly, "and that is why he is wounded."

"In the back," Sadao agreed.

They hesitated, looking at each other. Then Hana said with resolution:

"Come, are we able to put him back into the sea?"

"If I am able, are you?" Sadao asked.

"No," Hana said, "But if you can do it alone..."

Sadao hesitated again. "The strange thing is," he said, "that if the man were whole I could turn him over to the police without difficulty. I care nothing for him. He is my enemy. All Americans are my enemy. And he is only a common fellow. You see how foolish his face is. But since he is wounded..."

"You also cannot throw him back to the sea," Hana said. "Then there is only one thing to do. We must carry him into the house."

"But the servants?" Sadao inquired.

"We must simply tell them that we intend to give him to the police — as indeed we must, Sadao. We must think of the children and your position. It would endanger all of us if we did not give this man over as a prisoner of war."

"Certainly," Sadao agreed. "I would not think of doing anything else."

Thus agreed, together they lifted the man. He was very light, like a fowl that had been half-starved for a long time until it is only feathers and skeleton. So, his arms hanging, they carried him up the steps and into the side door of the house. This door opened into a passage, and down the passage they carried the man towards an

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empty bedroom. It had been the bedroom of Sadao's father, and since his death it had not been used. They laid the man on the deeply matted floor. Everything here had been Japanese to please the old man, who would never in his own home sit on a chair or sleep in a foreign bed. Hana went to the wall cupboards and slid back a door and took out a soft quilt. She hesitated. The quilt was covered with flowered silk and the lining was pure white silk.

"He is so dirty," she murmured in distress.

"Yes, he had better be washed," Sadao agreed. "If you will fetch hot water I will wash him."

"I cannot bear for you to touch him," she said. "We shall have to tell the servants he is here. I will tell Yumi now. She can leave the children for a few minutes and she can wash him."

Sadao considered a moment. "Let it be so," he agreed. "You tell Yumi and I will tell the others."

But the utter pallor of the man's unconscious face moved him first to stoop and feel his pulse. It was faint but it was there. He put his hand against the man's cold breast. The heart too was yet alive.

"He will die unless he is operated on," Sadao said, considering. "The question is whether he will not die anyway."

Hana cried out in fear. "Don't try to save him! What if he should live?"

"What if he should die?" Sadao replied. He stood gazing down on the motionless man. This man must have extraordinary vitality or he would have been dead by now. But then he was very young — perhaps not yet twenty-five.

"You mean die from the operation?"

Hana asked.

"Yes," Sadao said.

Hana considered this doubtfully, and when she did not answer Sadao turned away. "At any rate something must be done with him," he said, "and first he must be washed." He went quickly out of the room and Hana came behind him. She did not wish to be left alone with the white man. He was the first she had seen since she left America and now he seemed to have nothing to do with those

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whom she had known there. Here he was her enemy, a menace, living or dead.

She turned to the nursery and called, "Yumi!"

But the children heard her voice and she had to go in for a moment and smile at them and play with the baby boy, now nearly three months old.

Over the baby's soft black hair she motioned with her mouth, "Yumi — come with me!"

"I will put the baby to bed," Yumi replied. "He is ready."

She went with Yumi into the bedroom next to the nursery and stood with the boy in her arms while Yumi spread the sleeping quilts on the floor and laid the baby between them.

Then Hana led the way quickly and softly to the kitchen. The two servants were frightened at what their master had just told them. The old gardener, who was also a house servant, pulled the few hairs on his upper lip.

"The master ought not to heal the wound of this white man," he said bluntly to Hana. "The white man ought to die. First he was shot. Then the sea caught him and wounded him with her rocks. If the master heals what the gun did and what the sea did they will take revenge on us."

"I will tell him what you say," Hana replied courteously. But she herself was also frightened, although she was not superstitious as the old man was. Could it ever be well to help an enemy? Nevertheless she told Yumi to fetch the hot water and bring it to the room where the white man was.

She went ahead and slid back the partitions. Sadao was not yet there. Yumi, following, put down her wooden bucket. Then she went over to the white man. When she saw him her thick lips folded themselves into stubbornness. "I have never washed a white man," she said, "and I will not wash so dirty a one now."

Hana cried at her severely. "You will do what your master commands you!"

There was so fierce a look of resistance upon Yumi's round dull face that Hana felt unreasonably afraid. After all, if the servants should report something that was not as it happened?

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"Very well," she said with dignity. "You understand we only want to bring him to his senses so that we can turn him over as a prisoner?"

"I will have nothing to do with it," Yumi said, "I am a poor person and it is not my business."

"Then please," Hana said gently, "return to your own work."

At once Yumi left the room. But this left Hana with the white man alone. She might have been too afraid to stay had not her anger at Yumi's stubbornness now sustained her.

"Stupid Yumi," she muttered fiercely. "Is this anything but a man? And a wounded helpless man!"

In the conviction of her own superiority she bent impulsively and untied the knotted rugs that kept the white man covered. When she had his breast bare she dipped the small clean towel that Yumi had brought into the steaming hot water and washed his face carefully. The man's skin, though rough with exposure, was of a fine texture and must have been very blond when he was a child.

While she was thinking these thoughts, though not really liking the man better now that he was no longer a child, she kept on washing him until his upper body was quite clean. But she dared not turn him over. Where was Sadao? Now her anger was ebbing, and she was anxious again and she rose, wiping her hands on the wrong towel. Then lest the man be chilled, she put the quilt over him.

"Sadao!" she called softly.

He had been about to come in when she called. His hand had been on the door and now he opened it. She saw that he had brought his surgeon's emergency bag and that he wore his surgeon's coat.

"You have decided to operate!" she cried.

"Yes," he said shortly. He turned his back to her and unfolded a sterilized towel upon the floor of the tokonoma[2] alcove, and put his instruments out upon it.

[2] tokonoma: a niche or an alcove in a Japanese home for displaying a flower arrangement, *kakemono*, or other piece of art.

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"Fetch towels," he said.

She went obediently, but how anxious now, to the linen shelves and took out the towels. There ought also to be old pieces of matting so that the blood would not ruin the fine floor covering. She went out to the back veranda where the gardener kept strips of matting with which to protect delicate shrubs on cold nights and took an armful of them.

But when she went back into the room, she saw this was useless. The blood had already soaked through the packing in the man's wound and had ruined the mat under him.

"Oh, the mat!" she cried.

"Yes, it is ruined," Sadao replied, as though he did not care. "Help me to turn him," he commanded her.

She obeyed him without a word, and he began to wash the man's back carefully.

"Yumi would not wash him," she said.

"Did you wash him then?" Sadao asked, not stopping for a moment his swift concise movements.

"Yes," she said.

He did not seem to hear her. But she was used to his absorption when he was at work. She wondered for a moment if it mattered to him what was the body upon which he worked so long as it was for the work he did so excellently.

"You will have to give the anesthetic if he needs it," he said.

"I?" she repeated blankly. "But never have I!"

"It is easy enough," he said impatiently.

He was taking out the packing now, and the blood began to flow more quickly. He peered into the wound with the bright surgeon's light fastened on his forehead. "The bullet is still there," he said with cool interest. "Now I wonder how deep this rock wound is. If it is not too deep it may be that I can get the bullet. But the bleeding is not superficial. He has lost much blood."

At this moment Hana choked. He looked up and saw her face the colour of sulphur.

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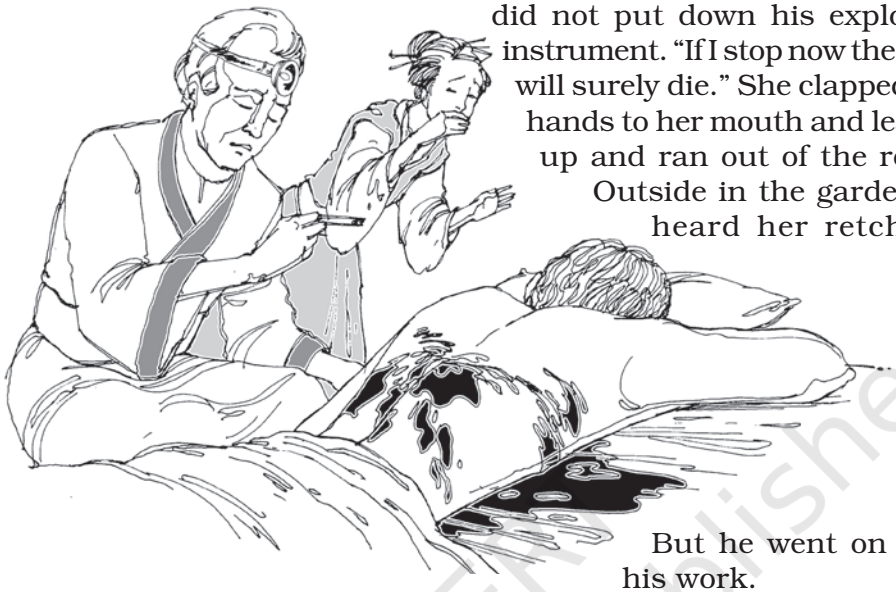

"Don't faint," he said sharply. He did not put down his exploring instrument. "If I stop now the man will surely die." She clapped her hands to her mouth and leaped up and ran out of the room. Outside in the garden he heard her retching. But he went on with his work.

"It will be better for her to empty her stomach," he thought. He had forgotten that of course she had never seen an operation. But her distress and his inability to go to her at once made him impatient and irritable with this man who lay like dead under his knife.

"This man." he thought, "there is no reason under heaven why he should live."

Unconsciously this thought made him ruthless and he proceeded swiftly. In his dream the man moaned but Sadao paid no heed except to mutter at him.

"Groan," he muttered, "groan if you like. I am not doing this for my own pleasure. In fact, I do not know why I am doing it."

The door opened and there was Hana again.

"Where is the anesthetic?" she asked in a clear voice.

Sadao motioned with his chin. "It is as well that you came back," he said. "This fellow is beginning to stir."

She had the bottle and some cotton in her hand.

"But how shall I do it?" she asked.

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"Simply saturate the cotton and hold it near his nostrils," Sadao replied without delaying for one moment the intricate detail of his work. "When he breathes badly move it away a little."

She crouched close to the sleeping face of the young American. It was a piteously thin face, she thought, and the lips were twisted. The man was suffering whether he knew it or not. Watching him, she wondered if the stories they heard sometimes of the sufferings of prisoners were true. They came like flickers of rumour, told by word of mouth and always contradicted. In the newspapers the reports were always that wherever the Japanese armies went the people received them gladly, with cries of joy at their liberation. But sometimes she remembered such men as General Takima, who at home beat his wife cruelly, though no one mentioned it now that he had fought so victorious a battle in Manchuria. If a man like that could be so cruel to a woman in his power, would he not be cruel to one like this for instance?

She hoped anxiously that this young man had not been tortured. It was at this moment that she observed deep red scars on his neck, just under the ear.

"Those scars," she murmured, lifting her eyes to Sadao.

But he did not answer. At this moment he felt the tip of his instrument strike against something hard, dangerously near the kidney. All thought left him. He felt only the purest pleasure. He probed with his fingers, delicately, familiar with every atom of this human body. His old American professor of anatomy had seen to that knowledge. "Ignorance of the human body is the surgeon's cardinal sin, sirs!" he had thundered at his classes year after year. "To operate without as complete knowledge of the body as if you had made it — anything less than that is murder."

"It is not quite at the kidney, my friend," Sadao murmured. It was his habit to murmur to the patient when he forgot himself in an operation. "My friend," he always called his patients and so now he did, forgetting that this was his enemy.

Then quickly, with the cleanest and most precise of incisions, the bullet was out. The man quivered but he was still unconscious. Nevertheless he muttered a few English words.

"Guts," he muttered, choking. "They got...my guts..."

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"Sadao!" Hana cried sharply.

"Hush," Sadao said.

The man sank again into silence so profound that Sadao took up his wrist, hating the touch of it. Yes, there was still a pulse so faint, so feeble, but enough, if he wanted the man to live, to give hope.

"But certainly I do not want this man to live," he thought.

"No more anesthetic," he told Hana.

He turned as swiftly as though he had never paused and from his medicines he chose a small vial and from it filled a hypodermic and thrust it into the patient's left arm. Then putting down the needle, he took the man's wrist again. The pulse under his fingers fluttered once or twice and then grew stronger.

Read and find out

What will Dr Sadao and his wife do with the man?

"This man will live in spite of all," he said to Hana and sighed.

The young man woke, so weak, his blue eyes so terrified when he perceived where he was, that Hana felt compelled to apologise. She herself served him, for none of the servants would enter the room.

When she came in the first time, she saw him summon his small strength to be prepared for some fearful thing.

"Don't be afraid," she begged him softly.

"How come... you speak English..." he gasped.

"I was a long time in America," she replied.

She saw that he wanted to reply to that but he could not, and so she knelt and fed him gently from the porcelain spoon. He ate unwillingly, but still he ate.

"Now you will soon be strong," she said, not liking him and yet moved to comfort him.

He did not answer.

When Sadao came in the third day after the operation, he found the young man sitting up, his face bloodless with the effort.

"Lie down," Sadao cried. "Do you want to die?"

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He forced the man down gently and strongly and examined the wound. "You may kill yourself if you do this sort of thing," he scolded.

"What are you going to do with me?" the boy muttered. He looked just now barely seventeen. "Are you going to hand me over?"

For a moment Sadao did not answer. He finished his examination and then pulled the silk quilt over the man.

"I do not know myself what I shall do with you," he said. "I ought of course to give you to the police. You are a prisoner of war — no, do not tell me anything." He put up his hand as he saw the young man was about to speak. "Do not even tell me your name unless I ask it."

They looked at each other for a moment, and then the young man closed his eyes and turned his face to the wall.

"Okay," he whispered, his mouth a bitter line.

Outside the door Hana was waiting for Sadao. He saw at once that she was in trouble.

"Sadao, Yumi tells me the servants feel they cannot stay if we hide this man here any more," she said. "She tells me that they are saying that you and I were so long in America that we have forgotten to think of our own country first. They think we like Americans."

"It is not true," Sadao said harshly "Americans are our enemies. But I have been trained not to let a man die if I can help it."

"The servants cannot understand that," she said anxiously.

"No," he agreed.

Neither seemed able to say more, and somehow the household dragged on. The servants grew more watchful. Their courtesy was as careful as ever, but their eyes were cold upon the pair to whom they were hired.

"It is clear what our master ought to do," the old gardener said one morning. He had worked with flowers all his life, and had been a specialist too in moss. For Sadao's father he had made one of the finest moss gardens in Japan, sweeping the bright green carpet constantly so that not a leaf or a pine needle marred the velvet of its surface. "My old master's son knows very well what he ought to

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do," he now said, pinching a bud from a bush as he spoke. "When the man was so near death why did he not let him bleed?"

"That young master is so proud of his skill to save life that he saves any life," the cook said contemptuously. She split a fowl's neck skillfully and held the fluttering bird and let its blood flow into the roots of a wistaria vine. Blood is the best of fertilisers, and the old gardener would not let her waste a drop of it.

"It is the children of whom we must think," Yumi said sadly. "What will be their fate if their father is condemned as a traitor?"

They did not try to hide what they said from the ears of Hana as she stood arranging the day's flowers in the veranda near by, and she knew they spoke on purpose that she might hear. That they were right she knew too in most of her being. But there was another part of her which she herself could not understand. It was not sentimental liking of the prisoner. She had come to think of him as a prisoner. She had not liked him even yesterday when he had said in his impulsive way, "Anyway, let me tell you that my name is Tom." She had only bowed her little distant bow. She saw hurt in his eyes but she did not wish to assuage it. Indeed, he was a great trouble in this house.

As for Sadao, every day he examined the wound carefully. The last stitches had been pulled out this morning, and the young man would, in a fortnight be nearly as well as ever. Sadao went back to his office and carefully typed a letter to the Chief of police reporting the whole matter. "On the twenty-first day of February an escaped prisoner was washed up on the shore in front of my house." So far he typed and then he opened a secret drawer of his desk and put the unfinished report into it.

On the seventh day after that, two things happened. In the morning the servants left together, their belongings tied in large square cotton kerchiefs. When Hana got up in the morning nothing was done, the house not cleaned and the food not prepared, and she knew what it meant. She was dismayed and even terrified, but her pride as a mistress would not allow her to show it. Instead, she inclined her head gracefully when they appeared before her in the kitchen, and she paid them off and thanked them for all that they had done for her. They were crying, but she did not cry. The cook and the gardener had served Sadao since

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he was a little boy in his father's house, and Yumi cried because of the children. She was so grieving that after she had gone she ran back to Hana.

"If the baby misses me too much tonight, send for me. I am going to my own house and you know where it is."

"Thank you," Hana said smiling. But she told herself she would not send for Yumi however the baby cried.

She made the breakfast and Sadao helped with the children. Neither of them spoke of the servants beyond the fact that they were gone. But after Hana had taken morning food to the prisoner, she came back to Sadao.

"Why is it we cannot see clearly what we ought to do?" she asked him. "Even the servants see more clearly than we do. Why are we different from other Japanese?"

Sadao did not answer. But a little later he went into the room where the prisoner was and said brusquely, "Today you may get up on your feet. I want you to stay up only five minutes at a time. Tomorrow you may try it twice as long. It would be well that you get back your strength as quickly as possible."

He saw the flicker of terror on the young face that was still very pale. "Okay," the boy murmured. Evidently he was determined to say more. "I feel I ought to thank you, Doctor, for having saved my life."

"Don't thank me too early," Sadao said coldly. He saw the flicker of terror again in the boy's eyes — terror as unmistakable as an animal's. The scars on his neck were crimson for a moment. Those scars! What were they? Sadao did not ask.

In the afternoon the second thing happened. Hana, working hard on unaccustomed labour, saw a messenger come to the door in official uniform. Her hands went weak and she could not draw her breath. The servants must have told already. She ran to Sadao, gasping, unable to utter a word. But by then the messenger had simply followed her through the garden and there he stood. She pointed at him helplessly.

Sadao looked up from his book. He was in his office, the other partition of which was thrown open to the garden for the southern sunshine.

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Read and find out

Will Dr Sadao be arrested on the charge of harbouring an enemy?

"What is it?" he asked the messenger and then he rose, seeing the man's uniform.

"You are to come to the palace," the man said. "The old General is in pain again."

"Oh," Hana breathed, "is that all?"

"All?" the messenger exclaimed.

"Is it not enough?"

"Indeed it is," she replied. "I am very sorry."

When Sadao came to say goodbye, she was in the kitchen, but doing nothing. The children were asleep and she sat merely resting for a moment, more exhausted from her fright than from work.

"I thought they had come to arrest you", she said.

He gazed down into her anxious eyes. "I must get rid of this man for your sake," he said in distress. "Somehow I must get rid of him."

(Sadao goes to see the General)

"Of course," the General said weakly, "I understand fully. But that is because, I once took a degree in Princeton. So few Japanese have."

"I care nothing for the man, Excellency," Sadao said, "but having operated on him with such success..."

"Yes, yes" the General said. "It only makes me feel you more indispensable to me. Evidently you can save anyone — you are so skilled. You say you think I can stand one more such attack as I have had today?"

"Not more than one," Sadao said.

"Then certainly I can allow nothing to happen to you," the General said with anxiety. His long pale Japanese face became expressionless, which meant that he was in deep thought. "You cannot be arrested," the General said, closing his eyes. "Suppose you were condemned to death and the next day I had to have my operation?"

"There are other surgeons, Excellency," Sadao suggested.

"None I trust," the General replied. "The best ones have been trained by Germans and would consider the operation successful

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even if I died. I do not care for their point of view." He sighed. "It seems a pity that we cannot better combine the German ruthlessness with the American sentimentality. Then you could turn your prisoner over to execution and yet I could be sure you would not murder me while I was unconscious." The General laughed. He had an unusual sense of humour. "As a Japanese, could you not combine these two foreign elements?" he asked.

Sadao smiled. "I am not quite sure," he said, "but for your sake I would be willing to try, Excellency."

The General shook his head. "I had rather not be the test case," he said. He felt suddenly weak and overwhelmed with the cares of his life as an official in times such as these when repeated victory brought great responsibilities all over the south Pacific. "It is very unfortunate that this man should have washed up on your doorstep," he said irritably.

"I feel it so myself," Sadao said gently.

"It would be best if he could be quietly killed," the General said. "Not by you, but by someone who does not know him. I have my own private assassins. Suppose I send two of them to your house tonight or better, any night. You need know nothing about it. It is now warm — what would be more natural than that you should leave the outer partition of the white man's room open to the garden while he sleeps?"

"Certainly it would be very natural," Sadao agreed. "In fact, it is so left open every night."

"Good," the General said, yawning. "They are very capable assassins — they make no noise and they know the trick of inward bleeding. If you like I can even have them remove the body."

Sadao considered. "That perhaps would be best, Excellency," he agreed, thinking of Hana.

He left the General's presence then and went home, thinking over the plan. In this way the whole thing would be taken out of his hands. He would tell Hana nothing, since she would be timid at the idea of assassins in the house, and yet certainly such persons were essential in an absolute state such as Japan was. How else could rulers deal with those who opposed them?

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He refused to allow anything but reason to be the atmosphere of his mind as he went into the room where the American was in bed. But as he opened the door, to his surprise he found the young man out of bed, and preparing to go into the garden.

"What is this!" he exclaimed. "Who gave you permission to leave your room?"

"I'm not used to waiting for permission," Tom said gaily. "Gosh, I feel pretty good again! But will the muscles on this side always feel stiff?"

"Is it so?" Sadao inquired, surprised. He forgot all else. "Now I thought I had provided against that," he murmured. He lifted the edge of the man's shirt and gazed at the healing scar. "Massage may do it," he said, "if exercise does not."

"It won't bother me much," the young man said. His young face was gaunt under the stubbly blond beard. "Say, Doctor, I've got something I want to say to you. If I hadn't met a Jap like you — well, I wouldn't be alive today. I know that."

Sadao bowed but he could not speak.

"Sure, I know that," Tom went on warmly. His big thin hands gripping a chair were white at the knuckles. "I guess if all the Japs were like you there wouldn't have been a war."

"Perhaps," Sadao said with difficulty. "And now I think you had better go back to bed."

He helped the boy back into bed and then bowed. "Good night," he said.

Sadao slept badly that night. Time and time again he woke, thinking he heard the rustling of footsteps, the sound of a twig broken or a stone displaced in the garden — a noise such as men might make who carried a burden.

The next morning he made the excuse to go first into the guest room. If the American were gone he then could simply tell Hana that so the General had directed. But when he opened the door he saw at once that there on the pillow was the shaggy blond head. He could hear the peaceful breathing of sleep and he closed the door again quietly.

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"He is asleep," he told Hana. "He is almost well to sleep like that."

"What shall we do with him?" Hana whispered her old refrain.

Sadao shook his head. "I must decide in a day or two," he promised.

But certainly, he thought, the second night must be the night. There rose a wind that night, and he listened to the sounds of bending boughs and whistling partitions.

Hana woke too. "Ought we not to go and close the sick man's partition?" she asked.

"No," Sadao said. "He is able now to do it for himself."

But the next morning the American was still there.

Then the third night of course must be the night. The wind changed to quiet rain and the garden was full of the sound of dripping eaves and running springs. Sadao slept a little better, but he woke at the sound of a crash and leaped to his feet.

"What was that?" Hana cried. The baby woke at her voice and began to wail. "I must go and see,"

But he held her and would not let her move.

"Sadao," she cried, "what is the matter with you?"

"Don't go," he muttered, "don't go!"

His terror infected her and she stood breathless, waiting. There was only silence. Together they crept back into the bed, the baby between them.

Yet when he opened the door of the guest room in the morning there was the young man. He was very gay and had already washed and was now on his feet. He had asked for a razor yesterday and had shaved himself and today there was a faint colour in his cheeks.

"I am well," he said joyously.

Sadao drew his kimono round his weary body. He could not, he decided suddenly, go through another night. It was not that he cared for this young man's life. No, simply it was not worth the strain.

"You are well," Sadao agreed. He lowered his voice. "You are so well that I think if I put my boat on the shore tonight, with food

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Read and find out

What will Dr Sadao do to get rid of the man?

and extra clothing in it, you might be able to row to that little island not far from the coast. It is so near the coast that it has not been worth fortifying. Nobody lives on it because in storm it is submerged. But this is not the season of storm. You could live there until you saw a Korean fishing boat pass by. They pass quite near the island because the water is many fathoms deep there."

The young man stared at him, slowly comprehending. "Do I have to?" he asked.

"I think so," Sadao said gently. "You understand — it is not hidden that you are here."

The young man nodded in perfect comprehension. "Okay," he said simply.

Sadao did not see him again until evening. As soon as it was dark he had dragged the stout boat down to the shore and in it he put food and bottled water that he had bought secretly during the day, as well as two quilts he had bought at a pawnshop. The boat he tied to a post in the water, for the tide was high. There was no moon and he worked without a flashlight.

When he came to the house he entered as though he were just back from his work, and so Hana knew nothing. "Yumi was here today," she said as she served his supper. Though she was so modern, still she did not eat with him. "Yumi cried over the baby," she went on with a sigh. "She misses him so."

"The servants will come back as soon as the foreigner is gone," Sadao said.

He went into the guest room that night before he went to bed himself and checked carefully the American's temperature, the state of the wound, and his heart and pulse. The pulse was irregular but that was perhaps because of excitement. The young man's pale lips were pressed together and his eyes burned. Only the scars on his neck were red.

"I realise you are saving my life again," he told Sadao.

"Not at all," Sadao said. "It is only inconvenient to have you here any longer."

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He had hesitated a good deal about giving the man a flashlight. But he had decided to give it to him after all. It was a small one, his own, which he used at night when he was called.

"If your food runs out before you catch a boat," he said, "signal me two flashes at the same instant the sun drops over the horizon. Do not signal in darkness, for it will be seen. If you are all right but still there, signal me once. You will find fresh fish easy to catch but you must eat them raw. A fire would be seen."

"Okay," the young man breathed.

He was dressed now in the Japanese clothes which Sadao had given him, and at the last moment Sadao wrapped a black cloth about his blond head.

"Now," Sadao said.

The young American, without a word, shook Sadao's hand warmly, and then walked quite well across the floor and down the step into the darkness of the garden. Once — twice... Sadao saw his light flash to find his way. But that would not be suspected. He waited until from the shore there was one more flash. Then he closed the partition. That night he slept.

"You say the man escaped?" the General asked faintly. He had been operated upon a week before, an emergency operation to which Sadao had been called in the night. For twelve hours Sadao had not been sure the General would live. The gall bladder was much involved. Then the old man had begun to breathe deeply again and to demand food. Sadao had not been able to ask about the assassins. So far as he knew they had never come. The servants had returned and Yumi had cleaned the guest room thoroughly and had burned sulphur in it to get the white man's smell out of it. Nobody said anything. Only the gardener was cross because he had got behind with his chrysanthemums.

But after a week Sadao felt the General was well enough to be spoken to about the prisoner.

"Yes, Excellency, he escaped," Sadao now said. He coughed, signifying that he had not said all he might have said, but was unwilling to disturb the General further. But the old man opened his eyes suddenly.

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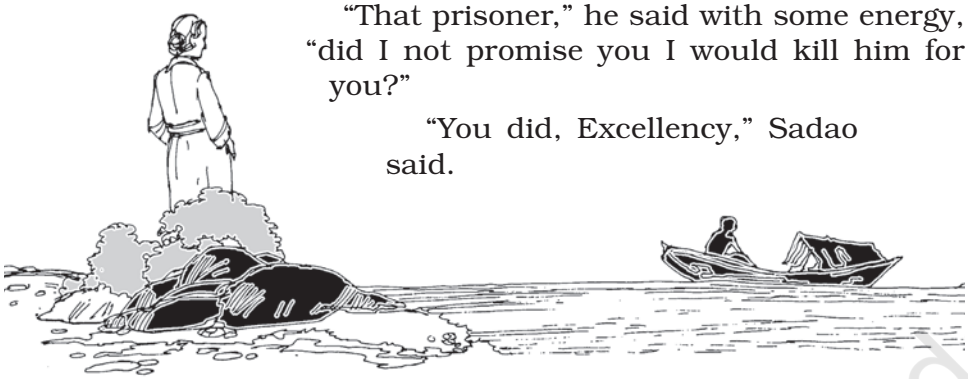

"That prisoner," he said with some energy, "did I not promise you I would kill him for you?"

"You did, Excellency," Sadao said.

"Well, well!" the old man said in a tone of amazement, "so I did! But you see, I was suffering a good deal. The truth is, I thought of nothing but myself. In short, I forgot my promise to you."

"I wondered, Your Excellency," Sadao murmured.

"It was certainly very careless of me," the General said. "But you understand it was not lack of patriotism or dereliction of duty." He looked anxiously at his doctor. "If the matter should come out you would understand that, wouldn't you?"

"Certainly, Your Excellency," Sadao said. He suddenly comprehended that the General was in the palm of his hand and that as a consequence he himself was perfectly safe. "I can swear to your loyalty, Excellency," he said to the old General, "and to your zeal against the enemy."

"You are a good man," the General murmured and closed his eyes." "You will be rewarded."

But Sadao, searching the spot of black in the twilighted sea that night, had his reward. There was no prick of light in the dusk. No one was on the island. His prisoner was gone — safe, doubtless, for he had warned him to wait only for a Korean fishing boat.

He stood for a moment on the veranda, gazing out to the sea from whence the young man had come that other night. And into his mind, although without reason, there came other white faces he had known — the professor at whose house he had met Hana, a dull man, and his wife had been a silly talkative woman, in spite of her wish to be kind. He remembered his old teacher of anatomy,

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who had been so insistent on mercy with the knife, and then he remembered the face of his fat and slatternly landlady. He had had great difficulty in finding a place to live in America because he was a Japanese. The Americans were full of prejudice and it had been bitter to live in it, knowing himself their superior. How he had despised the ignorant and dirty old woman who had at last consented to house him in her miserable home! He had once tried to be grateful to her because she had in his last year nursed him through influenza, but it was difficult, for she was no less repulsive to him in her kindness. Now he remembered the youthful, haggard face of his prisoner — white and repulsive.

"Strange," he thought. "I wonder why I could not kill him?"

Reading with Insight

1. There are moments in life when we have to make hard choices between our roles as private individuals and as citizens with a sense of national loyalty. Discuss with reference to the story you have just read.
2. Dr Sadao was compelled by his duty as a doctor to help the enemy soldier. What made Hana, his wife, sympathetic to him in the face of open defiance from the domestic staff?
3. How would you explain the reluctance of the soldier to leave the shelter of the doctor's home even when he knew he couldn't stay there without risk to the doctor and himself?
4. What explains the attitude of the General in the matter of the enemy soldier? Was it human consideration, lack of national loyalty, dereliction of duty or simply self-absorption?
5. While hatred against a member of the enemy race is justifiable, especially during wartime, what makes a human being rise above narrow prejudices?
6. Do you think the doctor's final solution to the problem was the best possible one in the circumstances?
7. Does the story remind you of 'Birth' by A. J. Cronin that you read in *Snapshots* last year? What are the similarities?
8. Is there any film you have seen or novel you have read with a similar theme?

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5

On The Face Of It

Susan Hill

Before you read

This is a play featuring an old man and a small boy meeting in the former's garden. The old man strikes up a friendship with the boy who is very withdrawn and defiant. What is the bond that unites the two?

Scene One

Mr Lamb's garden [There is the occasional sound of birdsong and of tree leaves rustling. Derry's footsteps are heard as he walks slowly and tentatively through the long grass. He pauses, then walks on again. He comes round a screen of bushes, so that when Mr Lamb speaks to him he is close at hand and Derry is startled]

Read and find out

Who is Mr Lamb? How does Derry get into his garden?

MR LAMB: Mind the apples!

DERRY: What? Who's that? Who's there?

MR LAMB: Lamb's my name. Mind the apples. Crab apples those are. Windfalls in the long grass. You could trip.

DERRY: I....there....I thought this was an empty place. I didn't know there was anybody here....

MR LAMB: That's all right. I'm here. What are you afraid of, boy? That's all right.

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DERRY: I thought it was empty....an empty house.

MR LAMB: So it is. Since I'm out here in the garden. It is empty. Until I go back inside. In the meantime, I'm out here and likely to stop. A day like this. Beautiful day. Not a day to be indoors.

DERRY: [*Panic*] I've got to go.

MR LAMB: Not on my account. I don't mind who comes into the garden. The gate's always open. Only *you* climbed the garden wall.

DERRY: [*Angry*] You were watching me.

MR LAMB: I saw you. But the gate's open. All welcome. You're welcome. I sit here. I like sitting.

DERRY: I'd not come to steal anything.

MR LAMB: No, no. The young lads steal....scrump the apples. You're not so young.

DERRY: I just....wanted to come in. Into the garden.

MR LAMB: So you did. Here we are, then.

DERRY: You don't know who I am.

MR LAMB: A boy. Thirteen or so.

DERRY: Fourteen. [*Pause*] But I've got to go now. Good-bye.

MR LAMB: Nothing to be afraid of. Just a garden. Just me.

DERRY: But I'm not....*I'm* not afraid. [*Pause*] People are afraid of *me*.

MR LAMB: Why should that be?

DERRY: Everyone is. It doesn't matter who they are, or what they say, or how they look. How they *pretend*. I know. I can see.

MR LAMB: See what?

DERRY: What they think.

MR LAMB: What do they think, then?

DERRY: *You* think.... 'Here's a boy.' You look at me...and then you see my face and you think. 'That's bad. That's a terrible thing. That's the ugliest thing I ever saw.' You think, 'Poor boy.' But I'm not. Not poor. Underneath, you are afraid.

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Anybody would be. I am. When I look in the mirror, and see it, I'm afraid of me.

MR LAMB: No, Not the whole of you. Not of *you*.

DERRY: Yes!

[*Pause*]

MR LAMB: Later on, when it's a bit cooler, I'll get the ladder and a stick, and pull down those crab apples. They're ripe for it. I make jelly. It's a good time of year, September. Look at them....orange and golden. That's magic fruit. I often say. But it's best picked and made into jelly. You could give me a hand.

DERRY: What have you changed the subject for? People always do that. Why don't you ask me? Why do you do what they all do and pretend it isn't true and isn't there? In case I see *you* looking and mind and get upset? I'll tell....*you* don't ask me because you're *afraid* to.

MR LAMB: You want me to ask....say so, then.

DERRY: I don't like being with people. Any people.

MR LAMB: I should say....to look at it.... I should say, you got burned in a fire.

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DERRY: Not in a fire. I got acid all down that side of my face and it burned it all away. It ate my face up. It ate me up. And now it's like this and it won't ever be any different.

MR LAMB: No.

DERRY: Aren't you interested?

MR LAMB: You're a boy who came into the garden. Plenty do. I'm interested in anybody. Anything. There's nothing God made that doesn't interest me. Look over there....over beside the far wall. What can you see?

DERRY: Rubbish.

MR LAMB: Rubbish ? Look, boy, *look*....what do you see?

DERRY: Just....grass and stuff. Weeds.

MR LAMB: Some call them weeds. If you like, then....a weed garden, that. There's fruit and there are flowers, and trees and herbs. All sorts. But over there....weeds. I grow weeds there. Why is one green, growing plant called a weed and another 'flower'? Where's the difference. It's all life.... growing. Same as you and me.

DERRY: We're not the same.

MR LAMB: I'm old. You're young. You've got a burned face, I've got a tin leg. Not important. You're standing there.... I'm sitting here. Where's the difference?

DERRY: Why have you got a tin leg?

MR LAMB: Real one got blown off, years back. Lamey-Lamb, some kids say. Haven't you heard them? You will. Lamey-Lamb. It fits. Doesn't trouble me.

DERRY: But you can put on trousers and cover it up and no one sees, they don't have to notice and stare.

MR LAMB: Some do. Some don't. They get tired of it, in the end. There's plenty of other things to stare at.

DERRY: Like my face.

MR LAMB: Like crab apples or the weeds or a spider climbing up a silken ladder, or my tall sun-flowers.

DERRY: *Things.*

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MR LAMB: It's all relative. Beauty and the beast.

DERRY: What's that supposed to mean?

MR LAMB: You tell me.

DERRY: You needn't think they haven't all told me that fairy story before. 'It's not what you look like, it's what you are inside. Handsome is as handsome does. Beauty loved the monstrous beast for himself and when she kissed him he changed into a handsome prince.' Only he wouldn't, he'd have stayed a monstrous beast. I won't change.

MR LAMB: In that way? No, you won't.

DERRY: And no one'll kiss me, ever. Only my mother, and she kisses me on the other side of my face, and I don't like my mother to kiss me, she does it because she has to. Why should I like that? I don't care if nobody ever kisses me.

MR LAMB: Ah, but do you care if *you* never kiss *them*.

DERRY: What?

MR LAMB: Girls. Pretty girls. Long hair and large eyes. People you love.

DERRY: Who'd let me? Not one.

MR LAMB: Who can tell?

DERRY: I won't ever look different. When I'm as old as you, I'll look the same. I'll still only have half a face.

MR LAMB: So you will. But the world won't. The world's got a whole face, and the world's there to be looked at.

DERRY: Do you think this is the world? This old garden?

MR LAMB: When I'm here. Not the only one. But the world, as much as anywhere.

DERRY: Does your leg hurt you?

MR LAMB: Tin doesn't hurt, boy!

DERRY: When it came off, did it?

MR LAMB: Certainly.

DERRY: And now? I mean, where the tin stops, at the top?

MR LAMB: Now and then. In wet weather. It doesn't signify.

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DERRY: Oh, that's something else they all say. 'Look at all those people who are in pain and brave and never cry and never complain and don't feel sorry for themselves.'

MR LAMB: I haven't said it.

DERRY: And think of all those people worse off than you. Think, you might have been blinded, or born deaf, or have to live in a wheelchair, or be daft in your head and dribble.

MR LAMB: And that's all true, and you know it.

DERRY: It won't make my face change. Do you know, one day, a woman went by me in the street — I was at a bus-stop — and she was with another woman, and she looked at me, and she said.... whispered....only I heard her.... she said, "Look at that, that's a terrible thing. That's a face only a mother could love."

MR LAMB: So you believe everything you hear, then?

DERRY: It was *cruel*.

MR LAMB: Maybe not meant as such. Just something said between them.

DERRY: Only I heard it. I heard.

MR LAMB: And is that the only thing you ever heard anyone say, in your life?

DERRY: Oh no! I've heard a *lot* of things.

MR LAMB: So now you keep your ears shut.

DERRY: You're....peculiar. You say peculiar things. You ask questions I don't understand.

MR LAMB: I like to talk. Have company. You don't have to answer questions. You don't have to stop here at all. The gate's open.

DERRY: Yes, but...

MR LAMB: I've a hive of bees behind those trees over there. Some hear bees and they say, bees *buzz*. But when you listen to bees for a long while, they humm....and hum means 'sing'. I hear them singing, my bees.

DERRY: But....I like it here. I came in because I liked it....when I looked over the wall.

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MR LAMB: If you'd seen me, you'd not have come in.

DERRY: No.

MR LAMB: No.

DERRY: It'd have been trespassing.

MR LAMB: Ah. That's not why.

DERRY: I don't like being near people. When they stare....when I see them being afraid of me.

MR LAMB: You could lock yourself up in a room and never leave it. There was a man who did that. He was afraid, you see. Of everything. Everything in this world. A bus might run him over, or a man might breathe deadly germs onto him, or a donkey might kick him to death, or lightning might strike him down, or he might love a girl and the girl would leave him, and he might slip on a banana skin and fall and people who saw him would laugh their heads off. So he went into this room, and locked the door, and got into his bed, and stayed there.

DERRY: For ever?

MR LAMB: For a while.

DERRY: Then what?

MR LAMB: A picture fell off the wall on to his head and killed him.

[*Derry laughs a lot*]

MR LAMB: You see?

DERRY: But....you still say peculiar things.

MR LAMB: Peculiar to some.

DERRY: What do you do all day?

MR LAMB: Sit in the sun. Read books. Ah, you thought it was an empty house, but inside, it's full. Books and other things. Full.

DERRY: But there aren't any curtains at the windows.

MR LAMB: I'm not fond of curtains. Shutting things out, shutting things in. I like the light and the darkness, and the windows open, to hear the wind.

Read and find out

Do you think all this will change Derry's attitude towards Mr Lamb?

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DERRY: Yes. I like that. When it's raining, I like to hear it on the roof.

MR LAMB: So you're not lost, are you? Not altogether? You do hear things. You listen.

DERRY: They talk about me. Downstairs, When I'm not there. 'What'll he ever do? What's going to happen to him when we've gone? How ever will he get on in this world? Looking like that? With that on his face?' That's what they say.

MR LAMB: Lord, boy, you've got two arms, two legs and eyes and ears, you've got a tongue and a brain. You'll get on the way you want, like all the rest. And if you chose, and set your mind to it, you could get on *better* than all the rest.

DERRY: How?

MR LAMB: Same way as I do.

DERRY: Do you have any friends?

MR LAMB: Hundreds.

DERRY: But you live by yourself in that house. It's a big house, too.

MR LAMB: Friends everywhere. People come in.... everybody knows me. The gate's always open. They come and sit here. And in front of the fire in winter. Kids come for the apples and pears. And for toffee. I make toffee with honey. Anybody comes. So have you.

DERRY: But I'm not a friend.

MR LAMB: Certainly you are. So far as I'm concerned. What have you done to make me think you're not?

DERRY: You don't know me. You don't know where I come from or even what my name is.

MR LAMB: Why should that signify? Do I have to write all your particulars down and put them in a filing box, before you can be a friend?

DERRY: I suppose...not. No.

MR LAMB: You could tell me your name. If you chose. And not, if you didn't.

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DERRY: Derry. Only it's Derek....but I hate that. Derry. If I'm your friend, you don't have to be mine. I choose that.

MR LAMB: Certainly.

DERRY: I might never come here again, you might never see me again and then I couldn't still be a friend.

MR LAMB: Why not?

DERRY: How could I? You pass people in the street and you might even speak to them, but you never see them again. It doesn't mean they're friends.

MR LAMB: Doesn't mean they're enemies, either, does it?

DERRY: No they're just....nothing. People. That's all.

MR LAMB: People are never just nothing. Never.

DERRY: There are some people I hate.

MR LAMB: That'd do you more harm than any bottle of acid. Acid only burns your face.

DERRY: *Only....*

MR LAMB: Like a bomb only blew up my leg. There's worse things can happen. You can burn yourself away inside.

DERRY: After I'd come home, one person said, "He'd have been better off stopping in there. In the hospital. He'd be better off with others like himself." She thinks blind people only ought to be with other blind people and idiot boys with idiot boys.

MR LAMB: And people with no legs altogether?

DERRY: That's right.

MR LAMB: What kind of a world would that be?

DERRY: At least there'd be nobody to stare at you because you weren't like them.

MR LAMB: So you think you're just the same as all the other people with burned faces? Just by what you look like? Ah....everything's different. Everything's the same, but everything is different. Itself.

DERRY: How do you make all that out?

MR LAMB: Watching. Listening. Thinking.

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DERRY: I'd like a place like this. A garden. I'd like a house with no curtains.

MR LAMB: The gate's always open.

DERRY: But this isn't mine.

MR LAMB: Everything's yours if you want it. What's mine is anybody's.

DERRY: So I could come here again? Even if you were out....I could come here.

MR LAMB: Certainly. You might find others here, of course.

DERRY: Oh....

MR LAMB: Well, that needn't stop you, you needn't mind.

DERRY: It'd stop *them*. They'd mind me. When they saw me here. They look at my face and run.

MR LAMB: They might. They might not. You'd have to take the risk. So would they.

DERRY: No, you would. You might have me and lose all your other friends, because nobody wants to stay near me if they can help it.

MR LAMB: I've not moved.

DERRY: No....

MR LAMB: When I go down the street, the kids shout 'Lamey-Lamb.' But they still come into the garden, into my house; it's a game. They're not afraid of me. Why should they be? Because I'm not afraid of them, that's why not.

DERRY: Did you get your leg blown off in the war?

MR LAMB: Certainly.

DERRY: How will you climb on a ladder and get the crab apples down, then?

MR LAMB: Oh, there's a lot of things I've learned to do, and plenty of time for it. Years. I take it steady.

DERRY: If you fell and broke your neck, you could lie on the grass and die. If you were on your own.

MR LAMB: I could.

DERRY: You said I could help you.

MR LAMB: If you want to.

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DERRY: But my mother'll want to know where I am. It's three miles home, across the fields. I'm fourteen. but they still want to know where I am.

MR LAMB: People worry.

DERRY: People fuss.

MR LAMB: Go back and tell them.

DERRY: It's three miles.

MR LAMB: It's a fine evening. You've got legs.

DERRY: Once I got home, they'd never let me come back.

MR LAMB: Once you got home, you'd never let yourself come back.

DERRY: You don't know....you don't know *what* I could do.

MR LAMB: No. Only you know that.

DERRY: If I chose....

MR LAMB: Ah....if you *chose*. I don't know everything, boy. I can't tell you what to do.

DERRY: They tell me.

MR LAMB: Do you have to agree?

DERRY: I don't *know* what I want. I want....something no one else has got or ever will have. Something just mine. Like this garden. I don't know what it is.

MR LAMB: You could find out.

DERRY: How?

MR LAMB: Waiting. Watching. Listening. Sitting here or going there. I'll have to see to the bees.

DERRY: Those other people who come here....do they talk to you? Ask you things?

MR LAMB: Some do, some don't. I ask them. I like to learn.

DERRY: I don't believe in them. I don't think anybody ever comes. You're here all by yourself and miserable and no one would know if you were alive or dead and nobody cares.

MR LAMB: You think what you please.

DERRY: All right then, tell me some of their names.

MR LAMB: What are names? Tom, Dick or Harry.

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[*Getting up*] I'm off down to the bees.

DERRY: I think you're daft....crazy....

MR LAMB: That's a good excuse.

DERRY: What for? You don't talk sense.

MR LAMB: Good excuse not to come back. And you've got a burned-up face, and that's other people's excuse.

DERRY: You're like the others, you like to say things like that. If you don't feel sorry for my face, you're frightened of it, and if you're not frightened, you think I'm ugly as a devil. I *am* a devil. Don't you? [*Shouts*]

[Mr *Lamb does not reply. He has gone to his bees.*]

DERRY: [*Quietly*] No. You don't. I like it here.

[*Pause. Derry gets up and shouts.*]

I'm going. But I'll come back. You see. You wait.

I can run. I haven't got a tin leg. I'll be back.

[*Derry runs off. Silence. The sounds of the garden again.*]

MR LAMB: [*To himself*] There my dears. That's you seen to. Ah....you know. We all know. I'll come back. They never do, though. Not them. Never do come back.

[*The garden noises fade.*]

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Scene Two

Derry's house.

MOTHER: You think I don't know about him, you think. I haven't heard things?

DERRY: You shouldn't believe all you hear.

MOTHER: Been told. *Warned*. We've not lived here three months, but I know what there is to know and you're not to go back there.

DERRY: What are you afraid of? What do you think he is? An old man with a tin leg and he lives in a huge house without curtains and has a garden. And I want to be there, and sit and....listen to things. Listen and look.

MOTHER: Listen to what?

DERRY: Bees singing. Him talking.

MOTHER: And what's he got to say to you?

DERRY: Things that matter. Things nobody else has ever said. Things I want to think about.

MOTHER: Then you stay here and do your thinking. You're best off here.

DERRY: I hate it here.

MOTHER: You can't help the things you say. I forgive you. It's bound to make you feel bad things....and say them. I don't blame you.

DERRY: It's got nothing to *do* with my face and what I look like. I don't care about that and it isn't important. It's what I think and feel and what I want to see and find out and hear. And I'm going back there. Only to help him with the crab apples. Only to look at things and listen. But I'm going.

MOTHER: You'll stop here.

DERRY: Oh no, oh no. Because if I don't go back there, I'll never go anywhere in this world again.

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[*The door slams. Derry runs, panting.*]

And I want the world....I want it....I want it....

[*The sound of his panting fades.*]

Scene Three

Mr Lamb's garden [*Garden sounds: the noise of a branch shifting; apples thumping down; the branch shifting again.*]

Mr Lamb: Steady....that's....got it. That's it... [*More apples fall*]
And again. That's it....and....
[*A creak. A crash. The ladder falls back, Mr Lamb with it. A thump. The branch swishes back. Creaks. Then silence. Derry opens the garden gate, still panting.*]

Derry: You see, you see! I came back. You said I wouldn't and they said....but I came back, I wanted....
[*He stops dead. Silence.*]
Mr Lamb, Mr....You've.....
[*He runs through the grass. Stops. Kneels*]
Mr Lamb, It's all right....You fell....I'm here,
Mr Lamb, It's all right.
[*Silence*]
I came back. Lamey-Lamb. I did.....come back.
[*Derry begins to weep.*]

The End

Reading with Insight

1. What is it that draws Derry towards Mr Lamb inspite of himself?

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2. In which section of the play does Mr Lamb display signs of loneliness and disappointment? What are the ways in which Mr Lamb tries to overcome these feelings?

3. The actual pain or inconvenience caused by a physical impairment is often much less than the sense of alienation felt by the person with disabilities. What is the kind of behaviour that the person expects from others?

4. Will Derry get back to his old seclusion or will Mr Lamb's brief association effect a change in the kind of life he will lead in the future?

How about...

using your imagination to suggest another ending to the above story.

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6

Memories of Childhood

Zitkala-Sa and Bama

Before you read

This unit presents autobiographical episodes from the lives of two women from marginalised communities who look back on their childhood, and reflect on their relationship with the mainstream culture. The first account is by an American Indian woman born in the late nineteenth century; the second is by a contemporary Tamil Dalit writer.

Gertrude Simmons Bonnin, born in 1876, was an extraordinarily talented and educated Native American woman who struggled and triumphed in a time when severe prejudice prevailed towards Native American culture and women. As a writer, she adopted the pen name 'Zitkala-Sa' and in 1900 began publishing articles criticising the Carlisle Indian school. Her works criticised dogma, and her life as a Native American woman was dedicated against the evils of oppression.

Bama is the pen-name of a Tamil Dalit woman from a Roman Catholic family. She has published three main works: an autobiography, 'Karukku', 1992; a novel, 'Sangati', 1994; and a collection of short stories, 'Kisumbukkaaran', 1996. The following excerpt has been taken from 'Karukku'. 'Karukku' means 'Palmyra' leaves, which with their serrated edges on both sides, are like double-edged swords. By a felicitous pun, the Tamil word 'Karukku', containing the word 'karu', embryo or seed, also means freshness, newness.

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I. The Cutting of My Long Hair .....*Zitkala-Sa*

The first day in the land of apples was a bitter-cold one; for the snow still covered the ground, and the trees were bare. A large bell rang for breakfast, its loud metallic voice crashing through the belfry overhead and into our sensitive ears. The annoying clatter of shoes on bare floors gave us no peace. The constant clash of harsh noises, with an undercurrent of many voices murmuring an unknown tongue, made a bedlam within which I was securely tied. And though my spirit tore itself in struggling for its lost freedom, all was useless.

A paleface woman, with white hair, came up after us. We were placed in a line of girls who were marching into the dining room. These were Indian girls, in stiff shoes and closely clinging dresses. The small girls wore sleeved aprons and shingled hair. As I walked noiselessly in my soft moccasins, I felt like sinking to the floor, for my blanket had been stripped from my shoulders. I looked hard at the Indian girls, who seemed not to care that they were even more immodestly dressed than I, in their tightly fitting clothes. While we marched in, the boys entered at an opposite door. I watched for the three young braves who came in our party. I spied them in the rear ranks, looking as uncomfortable as I felt. A small bell was tapped, and each of the pupils drew a chair from under the table. Supposing this act meant they were to be seated, I pulled out mine and at once slipped into it from one side. But when I turned my head, I saw that I was the only one seated, and all the rest at our table remained standing. Just as I began to rise, looking shyly around to see how chairs were to be used, a second bell was sounded. All were seated at last, and I had to crawl back into my chair again. I heard a man's voice at one end of the hall, and I looked around to see him. But all the others hung their heads over their plates. As I glanced at the long chain of tables, I caught the eyes of a paleface woman upon me. Immediately I dropped my eyes, wondering why I was so keenly watched by the strange woman. The man ceased his mutterings, and then a third bell was tapped. Every one picked up his knife and fork and began eating. I began crying instead, for by this time I was afraid to venture anything more.

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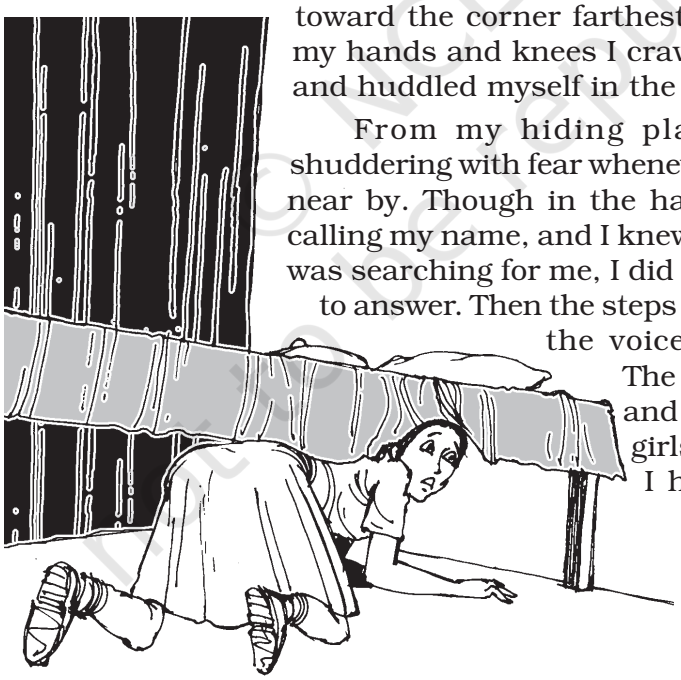
But this eating by formula was not the hardest trial in that first day. Late in the morning, my friend Judewin gave me a terrible warning. Judewin knew a few words of English; and she had overheard the paleface woman talk about cutting our long, heavy hair. Our mothers had taught us that only unskilled warriors who were captured had their hair shingled by the enemy. Among our people, short hair was worn by mourners, and shingled hair by cowards!

We discussed our fate some moments, and when Judewin said, "We have to submit, because they are strong," I rebelled.

"No, I will not submit! I will struggle first!" I answered.

I watched my chance, and when no one noticed, I disappeared. I crept up the stairs as quietly as I could in my squeaking shoes, — my moccasins had been exchanged for shoes. Along the hall I passed, without knowing whither I was going. Turning aside to an open door, I found a large room with three white beds in it. The windows were covered with dark green curtains, which made the room very dim. Thankful that no one was there, I directed my steps toward the corner farthest from the door. On my hands and knees I crawled under the bed, and huddled myself in the dark corner.



From my hiding place I peered out, shuddering with fear whenever I heard footsteps near by. Though in the hall loud voices were calling my name, and I knew that even Judewin was searching for me, I did not open my mouth to answer. Then the steps were quickened and the voices became excited. The sounds came nearer and nearer. Women and girls entered the room. I held my breath and watched them open closet doors and peep behind large trunks. Some one threw up the

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curtains, and the room was filled with sudden light. What caused them to stoop and look under the bed I do not know. I remember being dragged out, though I resisted by kicking and scratching wildly. Inspite of myself, I was carried downstairs and tied fast in a chair.

I cried aloud, shaking my head all the while until I felt the cold blades of the scissors against my neck, and heard them gnaw off one of my thick braids. Then I lost my spirit. Since the day I was taken from my mother I had suffered extreme indignities. People had stared at me. I had been tossed about in the air like a wooden puppet. And now my long hair was shingled like a coward's! In my anguish I moaned for my mother, but no one came to comfort me. Not a soul reasoned quietly with me, as my own mother used to do; for now I was only one of many little animals driven by a herder.

II. We Too are Human Beings .....*Bama*

When I was studying in the third class, I hadn't yet heard people speak openly of untouchability. But I had already seen, felt, experienced and been humiliated by what it is.

I was walking home from school one day, an old bag hanging from my shoulder. It was actually possible to walk the distance in ten minutes. But usually it would take me thirty minutes at the very least to reach home. It would take me from half an hour to an hour to dawdle along, watching all the fun and games that were going on, all the entertaining novelties and oddities is the streets, the shops and the bazaar.

The performing monkey; the snake which the snakecharmer kept in its box and displayed from time to time; the cyclist who had not got off his bike for three days, and who kept pedalling as hard as he could from break of day; the rupee notes that were pinned on to his shirt to spur him on; the spinning wheels; the Maariyaata temple, the huge bell hanging there; the pongal offerings being cooked in front of the temple; the dried fish stall by the statue of Gandhi; the sweet stall, the stall selling fried snacks, and all the other shops next to each other; the street light always demonstrating how it could change from blue to violet; the narikkuravan huntergypsy with his wild lemur in cages, selling needles, clay beads and instruments

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for cleaning out the ears — Oh, I could go on and on. Each thing would pull me to a stand-still and not allow me to go any further.

At times, people from various political parties would arrive, put up a stage and harangue us through their mikes. Then there might be a street play, or a puppet show, or a "no magic, no miracle" stunt performance. All these would happen from time to time. But almost certainly there would be some entertainment or other going on.

Even otherwise, there were the coffee clubs in the bazaar: the way each waiter cooled the coffee, lifting a tumbler high up and pouring its contents into a tumbler held in his other hand. Or the way some people sat in front of the shops chopping up onion, their eyes turned elsewhere so that they would not smart. Or the almond tree growing there and its fruit which was occasionally blown down by the wind. All these sights taken together would tether my legs and stop me from going home.

And then, according to the season, there would be mango, cucumber, sugar-cane, sweet-potato, palm-shoots, gram, palm-syrup and palm-fruit, guavas and jack-fruit. Every day I would see people selling sweet and savoury fried snacks, payasam, halva, boiled tamarind seeds and iced lollies.

Gazing at all this, one day, I came to my street, my bag slung over my shoulder. At the opposite corner, though, a threshing floor had been set up, and the landlord watched the proceedings, seated on a piece of sacking spread over a stone ledge. Our people were hard at work, driving cattle in pairs, round and round, to tread out the grain from the straw. The animals were muzzled so that they wouldn't help themselves to the straw. I stood for a while there, watching the fun.

Just then, an elder of our street came along from the direction of the bazaar. The manner in which he was walking along made me want to double up. I wanted to shriek with laughter at the sight of such a big man carrying a small packet in that fashion. I guessed there was something like *vadai* or green banana *bhajji* in the packet, because the wrapping paper was stained with oil. He came along, holding out the packet by its string, without touching it. I stood there thinking to myself, if he holds it like that, won't the package come undone, and the *vadais* fall out?

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The elder went straight up to the landlord, bowed low and extended the packet towards him, cupping the hand that held the string with his other hand. The landlord opened the parcel and began to eat the *vadais*.

After I had watched all this, at last I went home. My elder brother was there. I told him the story in all its comic detail. I fell about with laughter at the memory of a big man, and an elder at that, making such a game out of carrying the parcel. But Annan was not amused. Annan told me the man wasn't being funny when he carried the package like that. He said everybody believed that they were upper caste and therefore must not touch us. If they did, they would be polluted. That's why he had to carry the package by its string.

When I heard this, I didn't want to laugh any more, and I felt terribly sad. How could they believe that it was disgusting if one of us held that package in his hands, even though the *vadai* had been wrapped first in a banana leaf, and then parcelled in paper? I felt so provoked and angry that I wanted to touch those wretched *vadais* myself straightaway. Why should we have to fetch and carry for these people, I wondered. Such an important elder of ours goes meekly to the shops to fetch snacks and hands them over reverently, bowing and shrinking, to this fellow who just sits there and stuffs them into his mouth. The thought of it infuriated me.

How was it that these fellows thought so much of themselves? Because they had scraped four coins together, did that mean they must lose all human feelings? But we too are human beings. Our people should never run these petty errands for these fellows. We should work in their fields, take home our wages, and leave it at that.

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My elder brother, who was studying at a university, had come home for the holidays. He would often go to the library in our neighbouring village in order to borrow books. He was on his way home one day, walking along the banks of the irrigation tank. One of the landlord's men came up behind him. He thought my Annan looked unfamiliar, and so he asked, "Who are you, appa, what's your name?" Annan told him his name. Immediately the other man asked, "Thambi, on which street do you live?" The point of this was that if he knew on which street we lived, he would know our caste too.

Annan told me all these things. And he added, "Because we are born into this community, we are never given any honour or dignity or respect; we are stripped of all that. But if we study and make progress, we can throw away these indignities. So study with care, learn all you can. If you are always ahead in your lessons, people will come to you of their own accord and attach themselves to you. Work hard and learn." The words that Annan spoke to me that day made a very deep impression on me. And I studied hard, with all my breath and being, in a frenzy almost. As Annan had urged, I stood first in my class. And because of that, many people became my friends.

Reading with Insight

1. The two accounts that you read above are based in two distant cultures. What is the commonality of theme found in both of them?
2. It may take a long time for oppression to be resisted, but the seeds of rebellion are sowed early in life. Do you agree that injustice in any form cannot escape being noticed even by children?
3. Bama's experience is that of a victim of the caste system. What kind of discrimination does Zitkala-Sa's experience depict? What are their responses to their respective situations?

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